



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR  
WASHINGTON

JAN 20 2021

Memorandum

To: All Department of the Interior Employees

From: Secretary 

Subject: Thank You

On January 2, 2019, I was entrusted with the responsibilities of Secretary of the Interior. Today, that task concludes at 11:59 a.m.

Upon leaving the Main Interior Building today, I will have worked for the American people while at Interior for nearly 12 years. I have cherished every moment of this service. I have been fortunate enough to work with many of you—all dedicated public servants who are incredibly talented and committed to the mission of Interior.

In my service this term, first as Interior's Deputy Secretary and now as Secretary, my focus has always been twofold: (1) expeditiously carry out the President's vision consistent with our legal obligations and (2) strive to improve the overall performance of the organization. We have surpassed my initial expectations on both fronts over these last 1,460 days.

Interior's accomplishments have been historically impactful for the American people, including two significant legislative victories which I am confident will stand the test of time. The enactment of the Great American Outdoors Act and the John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019 have moved recreation and conservation priorities forward unlike any other time in my life.

Many of you individually took me up on my open-door policy and provided ideas and suggestions on ways we could improve our organization. We acted on many of these ideas, and Interior is better off because of it. Two notable examples from this include improving the National Environmental Policy Act process and waiving entrance fees on Interior lands for America's veterans and Gold Star families. These two Interior-driven policy changes alone have already had considerable impacts on the lives of so many. Thank you for making your voice heard.

I am proud of the investments Interior has made internally to improve our operations. Public service is a public trust, and it starts with having a culture of ethical compliance. We have significantly increased the number of career ethics staff to support each of you in your daily functions and centralized the operation to provide consistent guidance departmentwide. We also reorganized the Department into 12 unified regions to provide greater alignment externally and across our different Bureaus. These changes are already leading to better Government services.

I will forever have an affection for the Department's overarching mission and an appreciation and respect for you—the dedicated employees who thoughtfully accomplished this mission. I have greatly appreciated working with you.

## Notable Accomplishments

### **Sustainably Developing our Energy and Natural Resources**

- Reduced regulatory burdens and created smart regulations.
- Developed an oil and gas leasing program for a portion of the Coastal Plain of Arctic National Wildlife Reserve.
- Made offshore production safer by:
  - Increasing Outer Continental Shelf inspections by 46 percent;
  - Increasing enrollment in the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement's SafeOCS program from 3 percent to 85 percent;
  - Decreasing the number of well control incidents by 67 percent following the implementation of the 2019 Well Control Rule; and
  - Nearly tripling the number of reviewed Renewable Energy Industry Submissions.
- Held the largest geothermal lease sale in 2018.
- Approved the largest solar project in the United States—Gemini Solar Project.
- Released “A Federal Strategy to Ensure a Reliable Supply of Critical Minerals” in response to Executed Order 13817 to end our Nation's dependence on foreign-mined minerals.

### **Conservation Stewardship**

- Enactment and implementation of the Great American Outdoors Act
  - Historic investment of \$1.9 billion per year for 5 years into deferred maintenance on public lands (\$1.6 billion per year for Interior).
  - Permanent and full funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund at \$900 million per year forever.
- Enactment and implementation of John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act of 2019.
  - Encompassed more than 100 individual conservation bills, designating hundreds of miles of wild and scenic rivers, new national monuments, 1.3 million acres of new wilderness, and the African American Civil Rights Network, among many other initiatives.
  - Added 13 sites to the African American Civil Rights Network.
- More than 4 million acres were opened to new hunting and fishing opportunities at national wildlife refuges and national fish hatcheries.
- A total of 17 species recovered and successfully removed from the list of Threatened and Endangered Species—the most of any first term for an Administration in history.

- Interior treated more than 5.4 million acres of land to prevent wildfires, a 49-percent increase in comparison to the last 4 years of the previous Administration and the most acres treated in a 4-year time period since the data was first collected in 2003.
- Secured more than \$3.9 billion in funding for National Park Service maintenance and construction.
- Finalized new regulations that modernized the implementation of the Endangered Species Act, improving conservation and reducing legal uncertainty.
- Waived entrance fees to national parks, wildlife refuges, and other Interior-managed public lands and waters for veterans and Gold Star families.
- Protected or restored more than 61 million acres of wetlands.
- Provided more than \$5 billion in grant funding to States for wildlife conservation.

### **Restoring Trust and Being a Good Neighbor**

- Relocated the Bureau of Land Management's headquarters from Washington, DC to Grand Junction, CO.
- Transferred half a dozen water project titles to local ownership.
- Implemented the Colorado River Basin Drought Contingency Plan, which contains new voluntary water conservation measures to stabilize Colorado River reservoir levels and prevent triggers calling for mandatory cuts in water supply.
- Executed the Arkansas Valley Conduit.
- Participated in the first-ever meeting with every President from the freely associated states and the President of the United States at the White House.

### **Tribal Sovereignty**

- Established seven cold case offices around the country to combat the missing and murdered Indian American and Alaska Native crisis.
- Oversaw the disbursement of \$500 million in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act funding for Tribal communities and supported the Department of the Treasury in administering \$8 billion, which was the largest single appropriation for Indian Country in U.S. history.
- Repatriated Mesa Verde Tribal remains from Finland to the United States.
- Implemented multiple Indian water rights settlements to meet our trust obligations to American Indians, providing certainty for water users in basins that have been in constant conflict for decades.

- Improved Indian American education standards and created new innovative construction opportunities for school facilities, including the Gila Crossing Community School.
- Brought clarity to the Department's authority to take land into trust for Indian Tribes, ensuring that nearly 750 successful land-into-trust acquisitions were compliant.

### **Protect our People and the Border**

- Made approximately 700 arrests and seized 6,000 pounds of narcotics in Indian Country since 2018 through Interior's newly created Joint Opioid Reduction Task Force.
- Seized 77,250 pounds of marijuana, 560 pounds of cocaine, 75 pounds of heroin, and 2,190 pounds of methamphetamine across all the Department's law enforcement operations since 2017.
  - Investigated or charged more than 32,000 drug suspects with criminal offenses as a result.
- Transferred the jurisdiction of five segments of Interior-managed lands to the U.S. Army for the construction of 70 miles of border wall between the United States and Mexico, ensuring our national security and protecting our natural resources.

### **Reorganize DOI for the Next 100 Years / Achieve our Goals, Leading our Team Forward**

- Reorganized 49 regions across 8 Bureaus to 12 unified regions, creating greater efficiency, accountability, collaboration, and consistency across the Bureaus.
  - Appointed a field special assistant for each Interior region to serve as the point of contact for Departmental leadership, State and local governments, and other stakeholders.
- Reformed and restructured the Departmental Ethics Office by unifying 11 disparate Bureau programs into a centrally managed office.
  - Designated Agency Ethics Official (DAEO) reports directly to the Solicitor.
  - Increased the number of career ethics officials from 8 to 75—an 800 percent increase.
  - Since the consolidation of the ethics program, the DAEO has issued over 20 ethics program policies and procedures in order to document and formalize the ethics program operations, in addition to significantly improving oversight and compliance with Office of Government Ethics (OGE) statutory and regulatory requirements for the public and confidential financial disclosure filing systems.
- Received no findings or recommendations from OGE for Interior's ethics program as a result of these changes—a first in the Department's history—which is in stark contrast to the 14 recommendations issued in 2016 by OGE.
- Established the Departmental Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Office, the first organization in the history of the Department dedicated to improving the processing quality and capacity of FOIA operations.

- Issued uniform policies and procedures.
- Modernized FOIA technology.
- Raised hiring and performance standards for FOIA staff.
- Provided targeted operational support to help the Office of the Secretary FOIA office address its considerable backlog.