



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

MAY 22 2020

Memorandum

To: All Department of Interior Employees

From: Secretary

Subject: Resuming Normal Operations

Thank you for your dedication and commitment to advancing the Department of the Interior's (Department) mission and priorities for the American people, especially over the past couple of months. As always, your health and safety and that of the public who visit and use the lands we steward are of utmost importance. Your flexibility and professionalism have allowed us to adapt to changing circumstances while providing mission-critical functions and services.

At President Donald J. Trump's direction, we began a Department-wide, coordinated effort to evaluate the best way to return to a new normal for our operations. Consistent with the White House Guidelines for Opening Up America Again, and in general alignment with guidance from Governors, each Bureau has finalized a plan that will utilize a phased approach as we return employees to the workplace and continue efforts to ensure that access and opportunities across our public lands are fully restored.

Over the past few weeks, I have visited with some of you as I conducted various site inspections. I witnessed the significant measures you have taken to keep an overwhelming majority of our public lands accessible to the public throughout this pandemic. The visits have also provided me a more informed perspective on the challenges we face as we move into recovery. What has been clear is the creativity and the dedication many of you have brought to addressing this challenge.

To ensure we have the staff we need to properly address impacts from this challenge, we will expeditiously utilize new and existing hiring authorities that will allow Bureaus to hire the support staff needed to address COVID-19 response and recovery actions. These authorities, along with relationships with States and partners, will allow Bureaus to address immediate support needs.

Many States are now implementing protocols to return to normal operations. The Department will adapt to these various postures at the pace of the States. Throughout all phases, I will continue to rely on our Field Special Assistants to coordinate with their respective regional executive teams to ensure the Department's workplace flexibilities and operating protocols are applied consistently. I have also extended certain workplace flexibilities, including support for caregivers until schools resume normal operations, and, in the early phases of the recovery, the continuation of telework where consistent with operational needs. Other administrative actions, such as weather and safety leave, will sunset as employees are able to return to their duty

stations, while recognizing the continued importance of protecting our vulnerable employees through extended telework and workplace flexibilities.

Together, we have successfully navigated uncharted waters, and I know we will move forward confidently in the weeks and months ahead. Thank you for your dedicated service to the American people and your continued commitment to our Department's varied missions.