

BURGUM NOMINATION

HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

TO

CONSIDER THE NOMINATION OF DOUGLAS J. BURGUM
TO BE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

JANUARY 16, 2025



Printed for the use of the
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.govinfo.gov>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHING OFFICE

60-020

WASHINGTON : 2025

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

MIKE LEE, Utah, *Chairman*

JOHN BARRASSO, Wyoming
JAMES E. RISCH, Idaho
STEVE DAINES, Montana
TOM COTTON, Arkansas
DAVID McCORMICK, Pennsylvania
JAMES C. JUSTICE, West Virginia
BILL CASSIDY, Louisiana
CINDY HYDE-SMITH, Mississippi
LISA MURKOWSKI, Alaska
JOHN HOEVEN, North Dakota

MARTIN HEINRICH, New Mexico
RON WYDEN, Oregon
MARIA CANTWELL, Washington
MAZIE K. HIRONO, Hawaii
ANGUS S. KING, JR., Maine
CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO, Nevada
JOHN W. HICKENLOOPER, Colorado
ALEX PADILLA, California
RUBEN GALLEGOS, Arizona

WENDY BAIG, *Majority Staff Director*
PATRICK J. McCORMICK III, *Majority Chief Counsel*
JASMINE HUNT, *Minority Staff Director*
SAM E. FOWLER, *Minority Chief Counsel*

CONTENTS

OPENING STATEMENTS

	Page
Lee, Hon. Mike, Chairman and a U.S. Senator from Utah	1
Heinrich, Hon. Martin, Ranking Member and a U.S. Senator from New Mexico	3
Hoeven, Hon. John, a U.S. Senator from North Dakota	5
Cramer, Hon. Kevin, a U.S. Senator from North Dakota	14

WITNESS

Burgum, Douglas J., nominated to be Secretary of the Interior	16
---	----

ALPHABETICAL LISTING AND APPENDIX MATERIAL SUBMITTED

Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians:	
Letter for the Record	126
Alkire, Janet:	
Letter for the Record dated January 10, 2025	7
Letter for the Record dated January 11, 2025	198
All Pueblo Council of Governors:	
Letter for the Record	127
American Catfishing Association et al.:	
Letter for the Record	128
American Council of Engineering Companies:	
Letter for the Record	130
American Exploration and Mining Association:	
Letter for the Record	131
American Forest and Paper Association:	
Letter for the Record	133
American Gas Association:	
Letter for the Record	134
Biteman, Bo et al.:	
Letter for the Record	136
Burgum, Douglas J.:	
Opening Statement	16
Written Testimony	19
Responses to Questions for the Record	74
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma:	
Letter for the Record	138
Chukchansi Indians:	
Letter for the Record	140
Citizens for Responsible Energy Solutions:	
Letter for the Record	141
Coalition of Large Tribes:	
Letter for the Record	27
Coeur d'Alene Tribe:	
Letter for the Record	142
(The) Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation:	
Letter for the Record	144
Cramer, Hon. Kevin:	
Opening Statement	14
Cramton, Jack:	
Communication for the Record	135
Curley, Crystalyne:	
Letter for the Record	201

	Page
Domestic Energy Producers' Alliance:	
Letter for the Record	146
Eklutna, Inc.:	
Letter for the Record	147
GLAAD:	
Letter for the Record	149
Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Association:	
Letter for the Record	8
Heinrich, Hon. Martin:	
Opening Statement	3
Heritage Waters Coalition:	
Letter for the Record	151
Hispanics in Energy:	
Letter for the Record	152
Hoeven, Hon. John:	
Opening Statement	5
Indian Gaming Association:	
Letter for the Record	153
Institute of Makers of Explosives:	
Letter for the Record	154
Koi Nation of Northern California:	
Letter for the Record	155
Lee, Hon. Mike:	
Opening Statement	1
Little Shell Chippewa Tribe:	
Letter for the Record	156
Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project:	
Letter for the Record	157
Lytton Rancheria:	
Letter for the Record	158
Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation:	
Letter for the Record	10
Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation:	
Letter for the Record	159
Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin:	
Letter for the Record	160
Moapa Band of Paiutes:	
Letter for the Record	161
Montana Trappers Association:	
Letter for the Record	162
NAFOA:	
Letter for the Record	172
National Alliance of Forest Owners et al.:	
Letter for the Record	163
National Mining Association:	
Letter for the Record	165
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association:	
Letter for the Record	167
National Stone, Sand, and Gravel Association:	
Letter for the Record	169
National Trappers Association:	
Letter for the Record	170
National Tribal Energy Association:	
Letter for the Record	171
National Water Resources Association:	
Letter for the Record	148
Navajo Nation:	
Letter for the Record	174
Neiman, Chip et al.:	
Letter for the Record	175
NSSF:	
Letter for the Record	177
Oglala Sioux Tribe:	
Letter for the Record	179
Osage Nation:	
Letter for the Record	181

V

	Page
Outdoor Heritage Coalition:	
Letter for the Record	182
Outdoor Recreation Roundtable:	
Letter for the Record	183
Pala Band of Mission Indians:	
Letter for the Record	185
Pascua Yaqui Tribe:	
Letter for the Record	186
Portland Cement Association:	
Letter for the Record	187
Pueblo of Santa Ana:	
Letter for the Record	188
Puyallup Tribe of Indians:	
Letter for the Record	189
RV Industry Association:	
Letter for the Record	190
San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe:	
Letter for the Record	192
Santa Clara Pueblo:	
Letter for the Record	194
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma:	
Letter for the Record	195
Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation:	
Letter for the Record	11
Southern Ute Indian Tribe:	
Letter for the Record	196
Spirit Lake Nation:	
Letter for the Record	12
Tribal Alliance of Sovereign Indian Nations:	
Letter for the Record	199
Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana:	
Letter for the Record	200
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians:	
Letter for the Record	13
U.S. Chamber of Commerce:	
Letter for the Record	202
Velasquez, Kasey:	
Letter for the Record	204
Viejas Tribal Government:	
Letter for the Record	203
Yavapai-Apache Nation:	
Letter for the Record	205

BURGUM NOMINATION

THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2025

**U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC.**

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m. in Room SD-366, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Mike Lee, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE LEE,
U.S. SENATOR FROM UTAH**

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning, and welcome to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. This is a hearing that we are holding today to consider Governor Doug Burgum of North Dakota to be the Secretary of the Interior. It is an honor and a privilege to serve in this capacity as Chairman during such a pivotal moment for our nation and issues surrounding its energy needs and land management policies.

I want to extend a warm welcome to Governor Doug Burgum, and to his wife, Kathryn, thank you for being here. And thank you both for joining us today, and you will have a chance in a moment to introduce anyone else in the audience who is here with you today that you would like to.

Governor Burgum, your nomination to lead the Department of the Interior comes at an urgent time, as Americans under the policies of the Biden Administration are suffering from skyrocketing energy prices that drive up the cost of everything from gas to groceries, from housing to healthcare, to restrictive land use policies that tend to stifle growth generally. The challenges facing American families are mounting and they are staggering.

This past November, voters decided to send a clear message. They demanded bold leaders willing to break from the status quo and take a fresh approach, one less likely to result in this awful pattern of inflation in which we found ourselves over the last four years. Your nomination has garnered remarkable support from tribes, from organizations, businesses, and people of all stripes and backgrounds, particularly those who were most uniquely and directly affected by the U.S. Department of the Interior and its policies. The dozens of letters of support, nationwide, further underscore your reputation as a leader, one who is committed to change, committed to fostering relationships, and they reflect pretty widespread confidence in your vision and in your readiness to lead this organization.

The Department of the Interior, of course, plays a central role in addressing many of these challenges, particularly in states like Utah, my state, where federal land management shapes nearly every aspect of our day-to-day life because, well, the Federal Government owns two-thirds of the land, about 67 percent in my state. And there are other members of this Committee who represent other public land states who understand the relationship between the Department you have been called to lead and their day-to-day lives. Nearly one-fifth of the land in the United States is under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Department of the Interior. In my state, it's much higher than that, of course. And this influences everything from energy development, to public land access, tribal relations, and wildlife management. In Utah, where the Federal Government controls more than two-thirds of the land, the impact of these policies is profound. The decisions made in Washington ripple through our economy and our communities in ways that are unmistakable and not always positive.

Unfortunately, these policies have taken a troubling turn during the Biden Administration. Expanding national monuments like Bears Ears and Grand Staircase without meaningful input from local communities has jeopardized access and harmed the locals, who call these places home. The Public Lands Rule and restrictive management plans have placed unnecessary and often insurmountable barriers in the way of responsible resource development and land access. On his first day in office, President Biden issued a moratorium on oil and gas leasing, severely damaging our energy security, and locking away resources we needed to power our homes and our economy.

Now, over time, these decisions have revealed a pattern of disregard for the multiple-use mandate that federal land management is supposed to uphold, and to which it has been subject for nearly 50 years. The consequences of these policies extend, of course, far beyond Utah. As wildfires devastate California, it is clear that mismanagement of public lands has consequences that often reach far beyond rural areas. Federal agencies must reevaluate their approach to wildfire prevention, prioritizing forest management strategies that mitigate the risk of catastrophic blazes. Utah and other western states know too well the devastation that these fires cause, and addressing this crisis must be a very key priority for the Department.

Reversing course will, of course, require bold leadership and a willingness to embrace innovative solutions. The Department of the Interior must take a hard look at the leasing restrictions of the last few years, which have steered development toward low-potential areas while blocking access to high-value resources, like critical minerals. These are the building blocks for our economy and our national defense and we can't afford to let bureaucratic delays jeopardize our future.

Housing shortages across the West present another daunting challenge that we have to face. By working with state and local governments to identify underutilized federal lands, the Department could finally, meaningfully alleviate the housing crisis in places like Utah, where the demand for affordable homes far exceeds supply. Bills like my HOUSES Act would provide a long-term

strategy and a strong framework for such partnerships, showing that federal land policy can drive solutions rather than creating obstacles. The Colorado River, a lifeline for millions across the West, faces growing threats. Effective communication and support from the Department of the Interior as states negotiate the river's future will be critical to safeguarding that vital resource.

Our national parks also require renewed attention. These iconic landscapes are a source of pride and a major economic driver for the gateway communities surrounding them. According to some polls, they are one of the few features of the Federal Government that people actually like, so we have got to take care of them. The Department must work to balance accessibility with conservation, ensuring that visitors can enjoy these treasures without compromising the future. This will require stronger partnerships with local stakeholders to address infrastructure needs and manage visitor impacts.

On the regulatory front, the misuse of the Endangered Species Act has caused significant harm by halting development projects and undermining state authority. While the ESA is an essential tool for protecting imperiled species, it must be applied judiciously and in coordination with local governments to avoid unnecessary conflict.

Governor Burgum, your track record uniquely positions you, in particular, to lead the Department of the Interior during this challenging time. Your vision and your leadership will be instrumental to restoring balance to federal policies and ensuring that public lands are managed with accountability and with care. Utah stands ready to work with you in tackling these challenges and charting a new course that reflects the principles of federalism and respect for local communities. Utah stands ready to work with you in tackling these challenges and charting a new course, and I invite you to visit Utah as soon as you have a chance to see firsthand the opportunities and the challenges we face.

The hearing that we are having today marks the beginning of an essential conversation about the future of the Department of the Interior, and I look forward to hearing your perspective and exploring ways that we can work together to address these pressing issues.

Thanks again for your willingness to serve, and I really look forward to our discussions today. I am going to turn the time over now to our Ranking Member, Senator Martin Heinrich from New Mexico.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARTIN HEINRICH,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW MEXICO**

Senator HEINRICH. Thank you, Chairman, and Governor Burgum, welcome to the Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

We had a great conversation last week. I am very much looking forward to hearing your answers to the questions today. And I, too, want to begin by acknowledging the horrific wildfires in California over the last couple of weeks. Having spoken to many of my members on the dais, I know you are going to get some questions about

that, and in particular about firefighters, and how we make sure that they are supported.

The Department of the Interior has responsibility for an incredibly broad array of issues, from conserving the places that Americans love to spend time with their families, to protecting and recovering our most iconic wildlife species, to delivering water to cities and farms across the West and fulfilling our nation's trust responsibilities to tribal nations. Pretty much any job that involves responsibilities that range from elementary school students and health care to bison is a pretty big job. Public lands are where we go to camp and hike and hunt and fish and spend time with our families. They are where our veterans go to seek the peace and solitude that their service to our country could not always provide. And while there are some who argue that the very existence of public lands—places like Yosemite or the Bitterroot National Forest—is unconstitutional, most Americans know that the idea of lands that belong to everyone, no matter where they live or who their parents are or how thick or thin their wallet is, is one of the most democratic ideas of our nation. I hope you will join me in keeping public lands in public hands.

The Interior Department is also the leader in meeting our nation's trust responsibility to tribal nations and upholding the treaty commitments that we, as a nation, made to tribes and their members. As a nation, as we discussed in my office, we routinely fall short of meeting those commitments. We can and we must do better.

As the relentless pace of climate change brings bigger floods, hotter summers, higher winds, as we have seen in California, and diminished snowpack, which we are experiencing in New Mexico, it is also driving the long-term aridification of the western United States. Over the next 50 years, it is expected that New Mexico will have 25 percent less water than we have had historically. And we are not alone in that. The Colorado River, which provides drinking water for 40 million people, irrigates billions of dollars' worth of crops, provides essential habitat for fish and wildlife, and will likely never return to those early 20th century flows that we used to be able to expect. Through the Bureau of Reclamation, the Department of the Interior must play an active role in helping the West transition to that new water reality.

And as you know, the Interior Department is also an energy department. As we make the transition to a cleaner energy economy, the land and water managed by the Department will play an indispensable role in producing the energy that we need, as well as facilitating the ability to move that energy around the country. From geothermal and hydrogen, to solar and wind, the Department's work is at the center of our energy future.

Governor, I very much look forward to hearing your plans on all of these topics and more, and I think we will have some very active questions from all of our members today.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Heinrich.

We are now going to hear introductions from the North Dakota delegation.

First, we will hear from Senator Hoeven, and then in a moment, from Senator Cramer.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN HOEVEN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NORTH DAKOTA**

Senator HOEVEN. Thank you, Chairman Lee, and also Ranking Member Heinrich, I appreciate that, and thanks for holding this hearing today.

Doug, Governor, welcome to you, and Kathryn, welcome to you and Doug, to your whole team. It's great to see you guys. Thanks for your incredible service on behalf of North Dakota, and it really is an honor today to introduce you to our Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

Senator Cramer, welcome to you, as well. Good to have you here.

I am not sure where to start. I have known Doug for more than 30 years, and we have working in various capacities for the duration, and as well as just being a very good friend, both Doug and Kathryn, to myself and my wife, Mikey—so, on behalf of her as well, greetings. And thanks for your willingness to serve.

Of course, grew up in Arthur, North Dakota and then went to school at NDSU, home of the Bison—the mighty Bison—and then went to a lesser-known school for—Stanford, I think—for an MBA, right? But after that, went to work for McKinsey Consulting. My staff wrote up this beautiful introduction, but I think I am just going to talk a little bit about our shared time together and friendship. He came back, and actually there was this nascent software company, Great Plains Software, and he, along with some of his relatives, mortgaged the family farm and bought it on a flyer and went to work and started hiring these kids from across—young people from across North Dakota to develop this software company. And I went to his office, I don't know, a long time ago, over 30 years ago, and he was in there, he was putting these 8x8, I guess, floppy discs into sleeves and then he would put them into boxes and then put them into larger boxes, and they were shipping it. And I said, Doug, you know, what is this? What are you doing? Well, I then learned all about—and if you know Doug, you know what I mean, it's true—all about PC software. And he built that company up, sold it—or went public in 1997 with it—sold it to Microsoft in 2001 and that became Microsoft Business Solutions. And so, Microsoft Business Solutions today had its genesis in Great Plains Software.

Doug ran Microsoft Business Solutions for a number of years, kept it there in Fargo. It was the largest location for Microsoft outside of Bellevue, Washington, and it had, I don't know, 2,000 or more North Dakotans working for them from across the state. Left that after a while, started some more companies. Went into philanthropy, including some really great things for our North Dakota State University and many other things. Revitalized, in many respects, downtown Fargo with his real estate development. In 1997, when I was Governor, I gave him the Theodore Roosevelt Rough Rider Award, which is our highest award. And I can remember him looking at me at the time and going, gee, John, I hope I am not done accomplishing things. And obviously, you weren't, Doug.

Ran for Governor in 2016—won. Ran again in 2020 and won overwhelmingly, mostly because of Kathryn, we think, but won by a big majority. Did a great job as Governor. Ran for President and actually was the first of the presidential candidates, when he left

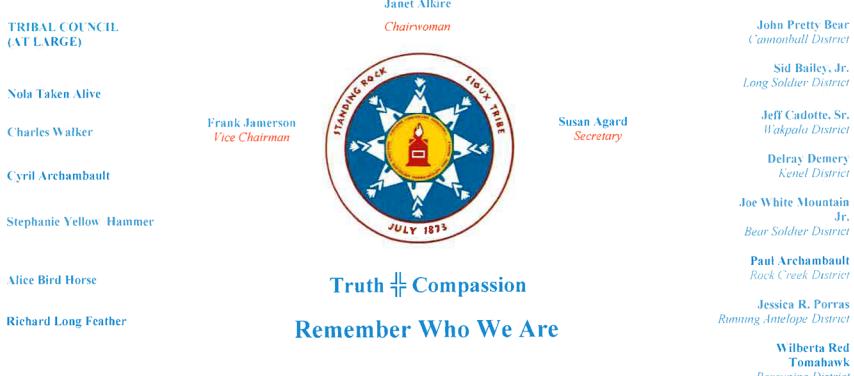
the race, to endorse President Trump. And President Trump, right from the get-go, and Kevin will tell you the same thing, when we talked to him about Doug, he was really excited about Doug from the jump. And I am thinking, well, the guy ran against you, really? But he never had anything but great things to say about Doug, and of course, Kathryn, which we all understand.

But he endorsed President Trump, and what Trump saw was somebody who truly understands energy, and the Trump Administration has such a big energy agenda that he knew this was the guy to lead it. So it's not just about leading the Department of the Interior as Secretary, but leading the National Energy Council, and that is what President Trump has really seen in him. But that being said, because there are a lot of things that Interior touches—I mean, this is a guy that loves the outdoors. He has got a ranch. He loves to be outside, riding horses, you know, rounding up cattle. He loves to hunt. So he loves the outdoors. He loves the National Park System. He is a historian. I mean, Angus King, he would even challenge you for trivial knowledge of history, and important knowledge of history too, but I mean, just any detail. Head-to-head, you two guys going into detail, it would be fun to listen to for a while.

And so, he loves the outdoors. He loves the park system, and talk to folks that he has worked with in Indian Country. Every single tribe in North Dakota—we have five reservations. We have a lot more tribes than that, but every single tribe has endorsed him. Mr. Chairman, I ask that these letters be introduced into the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[Letters of support follow:]



January 10, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
U.S. Senator—South Dakota
511 Senate Dirksen Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven
U.S. Senator—North Dakota
338 Senate Russell Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Rounds
U.S. Senator—South Dakota
502 Senate Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin Cramer
U.S. Senator—North Dakota
313 Senate Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: SRST Support for Governor Doug Burgum to serve as Secretary of the Interior

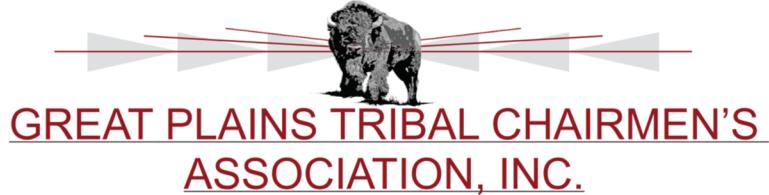
Dear Senators Thune, Hoeven, Rounds and Cramer:

On behalf of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, I write to support Governor Doug Burgum's nomination to serve as Secretary of the Interior. As Tribal Chairwoman, I personally know Governor Burgum's tireless efforts to work with our Nation, and the Five Tribal Nations of North Dakota. He consistently demonstrated his commitment to the nation-to-nation dialog. I appreciated his willingness to consult on the issues important to our communities. Issues in health care, mental health, substance misuse, law enforcement, education, and economic development. Governor Burgum knows we honor traditional values and culture, promote family and community wellness. "He has an open mind and an open heart." I trust that Governor Burgum will serve Indian Country well as a nominee for the position of Secretary of the Department of the Interior because of his knowledge and support of Tribal Sovereignty.

Thank you. *Wopila Tanka.*

Sincerely,

Janet Alkire, Chairwoman



Mailing Address: US Post Office Box 988, Rapid City, SD 57709

January 9, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
U.S. Senator—South Dakota
511 Senate Dirksen Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Rounds
U.S. Senator—South Dakota
502 Senate Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Debra Fischer
U.S. Senator—Nebraska
448 Senate Russell Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven
U.S. Senator—North Dakota
338 Senate Russell Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin Cramer
U.S. Senator—North Dakota
313 Senate Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Pete Ricketts
U.S. Senator—Nebraska
139 Senate Russell Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: GPTCA Supports Governor Doug Burgum for Secretary of the Interior

Dear Senators Thune, Hoeven, Rounds, Cramer, Fischer, and Ricketts:

On behalf of the Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's Association (GPTCA), I write to support Governor Doug Burgum's nomination to serve as Secretary of the Interior. GPTCA is the Great Plains Region (North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska) Intertribal Government Section 17 Corporation that serves the 16 Great Plains Region Indian nations and tribes to preserve treaty rights, support tribal self-government, and promote Indian Self-Determination and nation-to-nation relations with the United States of America.

At GPTCA, we know Governor Burgum because he has worked with our Native nations and tribes for eight years as Governor, on a nation-to-nation basis. Meeting with us to consult on the issues important to our communities, including nation-to-nation relations, health care, mental health and substance misuse, public safety and law enforcement, education and tribal economic development. Doug Burgum knows we need education and jobs for our kids. He knows we, as Native communities, honor traditional values and native culture, promote family and community wellness. Doug Burgum has an open mind and deals with the facts, seeking solutions based on consensus. From Indian country, we know that Governor Burgum will serve America honorably

and well as Secretary of the Interior. Based on our North Dakota tribes' experience, we support Doug Burgum's nomination for Secretary of the Interior. Please give Governor Burgum your support. *Wopila Tanka.*

Sincerely,



GPTCA Chairman Frank Star Comes Out
And President Oglala Sioux Tribe



Office of the Chairman
Mark N. Fox

MANDAN, HIDATSA & ARIKARA NATION

Three Affiliated Tribes * Fort Berthold Indian Reservation
Tribal Business Council

January 13, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the nominee of Secretary; U.S. Department of Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

I write today in support of former Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. I am thrilled at his nomination to serve the incoming Administration in this capacity.

The Secretary of Interior is the lead cabinet official charged with ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty responsibility with Tribal nations, he not only understands this relationship and duty, but will put words to actions.

As Governor, Doug Burgum has built a strong relationship of trust and transparency with the five tribes of North Dakota, namely, the MHA Nation and will undoubtedly bring the same principles in his new role as Secretary. We can think of no one better for this job than Doug Burgum and look forward to his swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

Sincerely,

Mark N. Fox, Chairman
Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara Nation



Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate

LAKE TRAVERSE RESERVATION
Office of the Tribal Chairman

12554 BIA HWY 711, BOX 509
AGENCY VILLAGE, SOUTH DAKOTA 57262-0509
PHONE: (605)698-3911

January 13, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
U.S. Senator—South Dakota
511 Senate Dirksen Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Rounds
U.S. Senator—South Dakota
502 Senate Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven
U.S. Senator—North Dakota
338 Senate Russell Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin Cramer
U.S. Senator—North Dakota
313 Senate Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: SWO Support for Governor Doug Burgum to serve as Secretary of the Interior

Dear Senator Thune, Hoeven, Rounds and Cramer:

On behalf of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate (SWO) of the Lake Traverse Reservation of North and South Dakota, I write to support Governor Doug Burgum's nomination to serve as Secretary of the Interior. Governor Burgum has a positive track record of nation-to-nation relations with our North Dakota Indian nations and tribes, with regular consultation, he has always made an effort to reach reasonable solutions to our mutual state-tribal concerns, and Doug Burgum told us that he has Indian country in his heart.

At SWO, we know Governor Burgum because he has worked with our Native nations and tribes for eight years as Governor, on a nation-to-nation basis. Meeting with us to consult on the issues important to our communities, including nation-to-nation relations, health care, mental health and substance misuse, public safety and law enforcement, education and tribal economic development. Doug Burgum knows we need education and jobs for our kids. He knows we must honor traditional values and culture, promote family and community wellness. He has an open mind. From Indian country in North Dakota, we know that Governor Burgum will serve America honorably and well as Secretary of the Interior.

We fully support Doug Burgum's nomination as Secretary of the Interior. Please give Governor Burgum your strongest support. Thank you. *Wopida Tanka.*

Sincerely,

J. Garret Renville/Chairman

BIG COULEE ~ BUFFALO LAKE ~ ENEMY SWIM ~ HEIPA/VEBLEN ~ LAKE TRAVERSE ~ LONG HOLLOW ~ OLD AGENCY





SPIRIT LAKE TRIBE

P.O. BOX 359 • FORT TOTTEN, ND 58335 • PHONE 701-766-4221 • FAX 701-766-4126

January 9, 2025

The Honorable John Thune
U.S. Senator—South Dakota
511 Senate Dirksen Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Rounds
U.S. Senator—South Dakota
502 Senate Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven
U.S. Senator—North Dakota
338 Senate Russell Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin Cramer
U.S. Senator—North Dakota
313 Senate Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: SWO Support for Governor Doug Burgum to serve as Secretary of the Interior

Dear Senator Thune, Hoeven, Rounds and Cramer:

On behalf of the Spirit Lake Nation (SLN), I write to support Governor Doug Burgum's nomination to serve as Secretary of the Interior.

At SLN, we know Governor Burgum because he has worked with our Native nations and tribes for eight years as Governor, on a nation-to-nation basis. Meeting with us to consult on the issues important to our communities, including nation-to-nation relations, health care, mental health and substance misuse, public safety and law enforcement, education and tribal economic development. Doug Burgum knows we need education and jobs for our kids. He knows we must honor traditional values and culture, promote family and community wellness. He has an open mind and an open heart. From Indian country in North Dakota, we know that Governor Burgum will serve America honorably and well as Secretary of the Interior.

We fully support Doug Burgum's nomination as Secretary of the Interior. Please give Governor Burgum your strongest support.

Thank you. *Wopida Tanka.*

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lonna Street".

Lonna Street
Chairwoman
Spirit Lake Tribal Council



**TURTLE MOUNTAIN
BAND OF CHIPPEWA INDIANS**

4180 HIGHWAY 281
P.O. BOX 900
BELCOURT, NORTH DAKOTA 58316

(701) 477-2600
FAX: (701) 477-0916

January 9, 2025

The Honorable John Hoeven
Senator, State of North Dakota
Member, Energy and Natural Resource Committee
338 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Support for the nominee of Secretary; U.S. Department of Interior

Dear Senator Hoeven,

I write today in support of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. I am thrilled at his nomination to serve the incoming Trump Administration in this capacity.

The Secretary of Interior is the lead cabinet official charged with ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty responsibility with Tribal nations. Based on fist-hand experience during his tenure as North Dakota's Governor, he not only understands this relationship and duty, but will put actions to words.

Governor Burgum has built a relationship of trust and transparency with the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians. As one of five tribal leaders from the Great State of North Dakota, Governor Burgum will undoubtedly bring the same principles in his new role as Secretary. We can think of no one better for this job than Governor Burgum and look forward to his swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

Sincerely,
Hon. Jamie Azure


Chairman
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians

Senator HOEVEN. And more than 180 different tribes across the country have endorsed him too. That says something. That says something about a guy who is willing to sit down and talk to folks. And he—this is a guy that fits this job. He really does. He covers all the bases. And so, I hope everybody on this Committee will take time and visit with him and understand where he is coming from and understand that he will take time to understand your issues and work with you because I think you will find this is the right man, the right fit for this job.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cramer.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. KEVIN CRAMER,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NORTH DAKOTA**

Senator CRAMER. Thank you, Chairman Lee, and Ranking Member Heinrich, and congratulations to both of you on your leadership of this important Committee, and it was great to listen to John. And by the way, let me start out by doing what I always do best, and that is agree with John Hoeven. It has worked very well for me in my career. But what struck me right away is, as he starts talking like a governor, is I look around the room, then he brings up Angus. I'm thinking I'm in a former governors' club, for crying out loud. You guys, you are going to have a lot of great things to talk about.

You know, there is so much to be said, and John has done it very, very well. So I am just going to highlight a couple of things, and to John's point about President Trump's confidence in Doug Burgum, he called me a lot, the President did. He even called me when Doug was his opponent and said, I like that Doug Burgum guy a lot. And he said, he is just so smart and he is so good and he has got a big brain and he understands everything. And I said, he does. He does, and he will be very, very valuable to you in your service.

And I think, as a consumer, as Governor Burgum and First Lady Kathryn are consumers of these incredible federal assets of ours, our great, rich properties, as recreators, understanding the value that it brings to agriculture, that they bring to extraction—responsible extraction of minerals, I think one of the things that often-times maybe does not get talked about with Governor Burgum is, he is not just an oil man from an oil and gas producing state, he is first and foremost, a conservationist. He is from the land of Roosevelt. And he absolutely, relentlessly carried the ball to ensure that the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library gets built and that it gets built in Medora, North Dakota, at the gateway to Theodore Roosevelt National Park, so that it can become the symbol of responsible extraction of minerals and responsible production of federal assets in a way that both exercises great care for the land and the water and the air, as well as great economic opportunity for the people that own these assets. That is a remarkable balance that he brings to this. And so, it's such a great honor for me to be able to be here with him to talk about the multiple uses of our federal assets in ways that recognize their value in so many ways.

And then, I want to—and I will just wrap up with this, because John did such a great job, but I want to read one short paragraph

from one of the letters from one of our tribes. And I know that many tribes throughout the country have written letters. Over my years of public service in North Dakota, and working hard at relationships with tribal leaders and recognizing government-to-government relationships, the thing that has impressed me the most, perhaps, about Doug Burgum as a governor, was the respect that he always showed for them and that has been reciprocated because he did the hard thing—he earned the trust that had been lost, not by former governors so much as just history, as history. It is hard work to do that.

And so, I am just going to close, Mr. Chairman, I just want to read a paragraph from Chairwoman Janet Alkire from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in North and South Dakota. Probably one of the more challenging relationships in recent years has been over the Dakota Access Pipeline, and that particular tribe, which with different leadership could have divided people in a big way. But even through that, through all of that, he earned their support, and I am just going to read this short paragraph, and then I will end with my thanks to you for allowing me this opportunity. And my thanks to you, Doug, for allowing me this blessing.

“Governor Burgum understands the Native American dynamic, which, if you are non-native can be difficult to maneuver. But he does it well. He understands the importance of honoring traditional values and culture, promoting family first, remembering who we are and where we came from, the struggles we endure, and community wellness.”

And so, it’s just my honor to be able to introduce him today, and I look forward to a successful confirmation and working together.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cramer, and also, Senator Hoeven.

Governor Burgum, the rules of the committee require that “at any hearing to confirm a Presidential nomination, the testimony of the nominee shall be under oath.” Accordingly, if you will please stand and raise your right hand, I will administer the oath.

Do you solemnly swear that the testimony you are about to give to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources shall be the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

Mr. BURGUM. I do.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Now, before I have you begin your opening statement, I will ask three questions that are addressed to each nominee who comes before the Committee.

First, will you be available to appear before this committee and other congressional committees to represent departmental positions and respond to issues of concern to the Congress?

Mr. BURGUM. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you aware of any personal holdings, investments, or interests that could constitute a conflict of interest or create the appearance of such a conflict, should you be confirmed and assume the office to which you have been nominated by the President?

Mr. BURGUM. No.

The CHAIRMAN. Are you involved or do you have any assets that are held in a blind trust?

Mr. BURGUM. No, I do not.

The CHAIRMAN. I will invite you now to introduce your family before you give your opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF DOUGLAS J. BURGUM, NOMINATED TO BE
SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR**

Mr. BURGUM. Well, good morning. Thank you, Senator Lee. Thank you, Senator Heinrich. I am grateful to have the opportunity. Thank you for your leadership on this Committee.

And I do want to begin with gratitude, as I always do, with a special thank you to my friends, Senator Hoeven and Senator Cramer, not just for their kind words this morning, but their incredible service to the country, and to North Dakota over their lifetimes.

And Senator Lee, as you acknowledged, I am deeply grateful for the support of all of my friends, my family, especially our three kids, and my amazing and courageous former First Lady, my wife, Kathryn Burgum, who is joining me here today.

It is certainly an honor to have been nominated by President Trump to serve as the 55th Secretary of the Interior. As Senator Hoeven said, I grew up in Arthur, North Dakota. This is a tiny town of about 400 people. We didn't even have paved streets when I grew up. It was all gravel, and it was 400 if you counted everybody that was also staying in the Good Samaritan Home—that's how we got to 400.

My father was a World War II Navy officer who served in the Pacific. My dad died when I was freshman in high school, and my mom went back to work in higher education. I was blessed to learn from them about service, about leadership, and about sacrifice, and certainly, from both of them, about a love of the outdoors. Growing up, I worked in our family's grain elevator. Every job I had, all the way from junior high through the end of college was one that required showering at the end of the day, not at the beginning of the day. And I even worked my way through undergrad at North Dakota State as a chimney sweep, which I loved that job because it was one where you could move up fast and always stay in the black. I thought it was the perfect career.

[Laughter.]

Mr. BURGUM. After grad school, as John mentioned, I had an opportunity to go directly from undergrad to Stanford for an MBA. And then later, when I was working in Chicago, I saw my first Apple II computer, and that was the moment, literally, where I said I need to get into the software business. And I had inherited 160 acres of farm ground from my dad, and I literally bet the farm on that tiny software startup called Great Plains. With a dream and hard-working team members we grew to a global public company with over 2,000 team members serving 140,000 businesses in over 100 countries around the world. I spent my entire professional career in the private sector until I was elected Governor in 2016. And for the last eight years, I have been blessed with the privilege of serving the citizens of the great State of North Dakota.

My time as Governor has been a valuable preparation for the opportunity and the privilege to potentially serve in the role of Secretary of Interior, as our state and my duties specifically as Governor there put me in contact with many of the bureaus inside the Department. In North Dakota, we share geography with five sovereign tribal nations. State and tribal relationships in North Dakota have sometimes been challenged, but the current partnership is historically strong because we prioritized tribal engagement through mutual respect, open communication, collaboration, and a sincere willingness to listen. I am grateful for the many tribal nations, both in and outside North Dakota, for expressing their support for my nomination.

As Governor of North Dakota, I also served as Chairman of the North Dakota Land Board, which manages our state's land and minerals with the goal of yielding a return for a state endowment fund that significantly funds public education. I chaired the North Dakota Industrial Commission, which oversees 16 agencies that are related to a variety of things, including energy research, the state's geologic resources, energy production, and transmission. The Governor of North Dakota also serves as the Chair of the State Water Commission, overseeing billions of dollars of water resources and projects. All of these are parallel responsibilities to Interior, and often interacted with Interior agencies.

North Dakota, of course, is blessed with a rugged natural beauty, including the majesty of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park, which is home to Theodore Roosevelt's Elkhorn Ranch, which is considered by many to be the cradle of modern conservation. And of course, we have beautiful Badlands. I would like to note here on the record that our Badlands are significantly badder than South Dakota's Badlands.

[Laughter.]

Mr. BURGUM. Just tremendously badder, not even close.

[Laughter.]

Mr. BURGUM. But we, in addition to that, we have got great prairies, world-renowned agriculture. We have got amazing hunting and fishing, four-season outdoor recreation, and much, much more.

In North Dakota, we created a prosperous economy by sustainably developing our natural resources, along with our respect for the land and the wildlife, and at the same time, having among the cleanest air and the cleanest water in the country. During our tenure, North Dakota experienced among the lowest unemployment in the nation and the highest real GDP growth. Demographically, our state went from one of the oldest states to one of the youngest. We attracted record levels of talent and investment capital. I say this because our success was underpinned by the understanding that we live in a time of tremendous, tremendous abundance, and we can access that abundance as Americans by prioritizing innovation over regulation.

If given the opportunity to serve as the Secretary of Interior, I will bring those experiences and those lessons learned to the leadership of the tens of thousands of dedicated professionals within the Department of the Interior, which brings us to President Trump's vision for a vibrant future that we can achieve together. The American people have clearly placed their confidence in Presi-

dent Trump to achieve energy dominance. And by energy dominance, that is the foundation of American prosperity, affordability for American families, and unrivaled national security.

Today, America produces energy cleaner, smarter, and safer than anywhere in the world. And when energy production is restricted in America, it doesn't reduce demand, it just shifts production to countries like Russia and Iran, whose autocratic leaders not only don't care at all about the environment, but they use their revenues from energy sales to fund wars against us and our allies. President Trump's energy dominance vision will end those wars abroad and will make life more affordable for every family in America by driving down inflation. And President Trump will achieve those goals while championing clean air, clean water, and protecting our beautiful lands.

Next to T.R. National Park we are building the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum to honor the leader who advised America to "speak softly, and carry a big stick." In our time, President Trump's energy dominance can be America's big stick that would be leveraged to achieve historic prosperity and world peace. The Department of the Interior, in cooperation with the U.S. Congress, this Committee, and the states will play a pivotal role in achieving the outcomes to make the world safer and America even better for our children, our grandchildren, and generations to come.

I thank you for inviting me here today and look forward to your questions and our discussion.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Burgum follows:]

GOV. DOUG BURGUM REMARKS AS PREPARED

Good morning! I want to begin with gratitude to you, Chairman Lee, and to you, Senator Heinrich, for your leadership on this committee.

A special thank you to my friends, Senator Hoeven and Senator Cramer, for their incredible service to North Dakota and their kind words of support.

And I'm deeply grateful for the support of all my friends, family, and my amazing and courageous wife, former First Lady Kathryn, who is joining us here today.

It's an honor to have been nominated by President Trump to serve as the 55th Secretary of the Interior.

I grew up in Arthur, North Dakota. Population of about 400 -- if you counted everyone in the Good Samaritan Home. My father was a World War II Naval officer who fought in the Pacific. Dad died when I was freshman in high school, and Mom went back to work in higher education. I was blessed to learn from them about service, leadership, sacrifice and a love for the outdoors.

Growing up I worked at our family's grain elevator. Every job I had through college was one that required showering at the end of the day -- not the beginning. This included paying my way through North Dakota State University by working as a chimney sweep.

After grad school at Stanford, I was working in Chicago when I saw my first Apple computer. That led me to literally "bet the farm" on a tiny software startup in Fargo called Great Plains.

With a dream, some mistakes, and hard-working team members, we grew into a global public company with 2000 team members serving 140,000 businesses in over 100 countries across the world.

I spent my entire professional career in the private sector until I was elected Governor in 2016. For the last 8 years, I have been blessed with the privilege of serving the citizens of the great state of North Dakota.

My time as Governor has been valuable preparation for the role of Secretary of the Interior, as our state and my duties put me in contact with many of the bureaus inside the Department.

In North Dakota, we share geography with 5 sovereign tribal nations. State and tribal relations in North Dakota have not always been great. But the current partnership is historically strong because we prioritized tribal engagement through mutual respect, open communication, collaboration, and a sincere willingness to listen. I am grateful for many tribal nations in and outside of North Dakota for expressing their support for my nomination.

As Governor, I served as Chairman of the North Dakota Land Board, which manages our land and minerals to yield a return for a state endowment fund that significantly funds public education. I chaired the North Dakota Industrial Commission, which oversees 16 agencies related to energy research, the state's geologic resources, energy production, and transmission. The Governor also serves as Chair of the State Water commission, overseeing billions of dollars of water resources and projects.

North Dakota is blessed with omnipresent natural beauty. Including the rugged majesty that is the Theodore Roosevelt National Park, home to TR's Elkhorn Ranch, which is considered the cradle of modern conservation.

We have the beautiful badlands -- which are "significantly badder" than South Dakota's Badlands, great prairies, world-renowned agriculture, amazing hunting, fishing, four season outdoor recreation, and much, much more.

In North Dakota, we created a prosperous economy by sustainably developing our natural resources with respect for our land and wildlife while having among the cleanest air and water in the country.

During our tenure, North Dakota experienced among the lowest unemployment in the nation and top real GDP growth. Demographically, we

went from one of the oldest states to the youngest. And we attracted record levels of talent and investment capital.

Our success was underpinned by our understanding that we live in a time of tremendous abundance, and we can access that abundance by prioritizing INNOVATION over regulation!

If given the opportunity to serve as Secretary of the Interior, I will bring those experiences and lessons learned to the leadership of the tens of thousands of dedicated professionals within Interior.

Which brings us to President Trump's vision for a vibrant future that we can achieve together. The American people clearly placed their confidence in President Trump to achieve Energy Dominance.

Energy Dominance is the foundation of historic American prosperity, affordability for American families, and unrivaled national security.

Today, America produces energy cleaner, smarter and safer than anywhere in the world. When energy production is restricted in America, it doesn't reduce demand, it just shifts production to countries like Russia, Venezuela, and Iran – whose autocratic leaders don't care about the environment.

President Trump's Energy Dominance vision will end wars abroad and make life more affordable for every family by driving down inflation. President Trump will achieve these goals while championing clean air, clean water, and our beautiful land.

Next to TR National Park, we're building the Teddy Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum to honor the leader who advised America to "speak softly and carry a big stick."

In our time, President Trump's Energy Dominance can be America's "big stick" that is leveraged to achieve historic prosperity and world peace.

The Department of the Interior -- in cooperation with U.S. Congress, this committee, and the states – will play a pivotal role in achieving the outcomes

to make the world safer and America even better for our children, grandchildren, and generations to come.

I thank you for inviting me here today and look forward to our discussion.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Governor Burgum. We will now begin our first round of five-minute questions. We will alternate back and forth between Republicans and Democrats, and I will go first, then Senator Heinrich and so on and so forth in order of seniority and arrival at the hearing.

I want to start by talking briefly about the Antiquities Act. This is a law passed over a century ago by Congress. It gives the President power unilaterally to declare national monuments. Now, there is a restriction in it that requires national monuments occupy no more land than is compatible—the smallest area compatible with the interest to be protected by the monument. These have become something of a political football in parts of the country, especially in my state. In Utah, President Clinton designated the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in 1996. President Obama added the Bears Ears National Monument in 2016, shortly before he left office.

Now, both of these designations were made over the objection of the people of Utah and their elected representatives. President Trump later reduced the size of both monuments in 2017, after he got elected, to bring them more into conformity with the Antiquities Act requirement for minimal boundaries. Then, in 2021, President Biden re-expanded them, exceeding the scope of the law and disregarding local input. As I explained to President Biden at the time, this is the size of two Delawares within my state that have been moved into this very restricted use classification. The point is not that there aren't beautiful things to protect in the state, but the line was drawn so big and the monument was made so expansive, in part because local leaders were not consulted and to the extent that they were heard, their counsel was ignored.

So Governor Burgum, I would like to invite you, when you visit Utah, to meet with those whose voices were ignored by the Biden Administration during those monument re-expansions. Will you work with me to try to fix that current mess and try to figure out how best to proceed and to make sure that the Antiquities Act-designated monuments don't exceed the restriction within the statute itself?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, thank you, Senator Lee, for that important question. The 1906 Antiquities Act, of course, was signed into law by President Roosevelt himself, and it was, as you stated multiple times, it states very clearly that it's the smallest possible area to protect those objects to be protected, and its original intention was really to protect, as it says, antiquities areas like, I would say, Indiana Jones-type archeological protections. These are essential that we protect these areas as a country and that is what the law intended. But I would look forward to working with you, and particularly in the area of local consultation, because when the Federal Government overreaches into a state like yours that already has over 60 percent of its land in public lands and restricts that use, it has got tremendous impact on tribes, on the local communities, and all those around. And I just think it's important that we strike the right balance. I look forward to working with you on this issue.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I appreciate that.

Housing is another area that I would like to address briefly. There is a particularly acute housing shortage in the West, where

the presence of federal land—not just the presence, but the predominance of federal land available for housing frequently results in shortages. It just makes a lot of things difficult. And it's not as though we have one part of the state that is all federal and another part of the state that is all non-federal. It's all intermingled. And as a result, it impacts all kinds of things.

Now, many of our communities in states like Utah and Nevada, among others, find ourselves feeling sort of like we are islands, floating islands within a sea of federal land, and that just constrains growth and makes our constraints on our housing supply that much more dire. I would love to work with you on a bill that I have introduced, that I have worked on for several years, called the HOUSES Act, in addition to looking for developing other creative ways to address the housing affordability crisis in the West. In your view, how can the Department of the Interior help address the housing crisis in areas like, as is the case in my state, where the presence of federal land often inhibits community needs?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, I understand that one of the great challenges we are facing in this nation right now is housing affordability, and in my discussion and friendship with Governor Spencer Cox of your state, I know that it's a high priority for him and for the state. I think there are opportunities for us to accomplish both. I mean, like I said, we are in a time of abundance. We have got federal lands abutting urban areas, and we maybe have other areas that maybe need to be protected, like we have done in North Dakota. As Governor, sometimes we have done land swaps. So we trade state land for private lands to provide better outcomes for both of those pieces of land. And I think there certainly are opportunities here.

Public lands, in general, some like the national parks, absolutely we need to support and protect every single inch of those, but in other cases, we have got a multiple-use scenario for our lands, and I believe there are pathways that we can find, particularly in states like yours and others that have 50 to 60 percent or more of your land held by the Federal Government, that we can find appropriate solutions to help address the housing. I look forward to working with you on that.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, thank you, Governor.

I see my time is expired. We will turn the time over to Senator Heinrich.

Senator HEINRICH. Governor, I actually want to continue on that same vein. I had a very long and detailed question here written by my staff that I am going to depart from and just go to the heart of the issue, which is: I think what people are concerned about—and this was a very hot issue this year because of legal action—is the idea that we would somehow, in a wholesale way, divest our public lands. So talk a little bit about how we can stay true to our conservation history, make sure that the things we do on our public lands—especially, well not especially, but economically, recreationally, and as you know, they play such an essential cultural role in states like mine—can be supported while making smart decisions about individual parcels.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, thank you, Senator Heinrich. I think we have to look no further than New Mexico for the answer to the fact that

we can find the balance because—as I know Senator Hoeven and I hate to acknowledge—New Mexico passed North Dakota as the number two oil and gas producer in the States, and yet, your state has got a tremendous record of protecting cultural and historical lands and providing that balance. And so, I think there is certainly the opportunity for us to find that balance going forward where we can protect the land that we need to protect, but also solve issues, whether it's housing or whether it's resource development that may be of interest to the tribe and the local communities.

Senator HEINRICH. And that's something we really pride ourselves on in New Mexico, is that we have been able to strike a balance that we have been able to be an energy leader on many fronts, and at the same time, we have created a number of national monuments that are not controversial, that are deeply supported by local leaders, by veterans groups, by tribes, by hunters, and fishermen alike. So I would just simply ask that before the Department makes wholesale changes to conservation designations in the State of New Mexico, at least, that you would meet with myself and any local leaders who helped to create those designations in the first place.

Mr. BURGUM. Yes, absolutely, I would look forward to those discussions with you, and I think, again, as you have described, the key to this is the local consultation. As Senator Lee and other states have experienced, there have been incidents where there has been complete and total opposition and no local consultation. And I think, again, my experience as Governor and working with tribes and working with local communities in North Dakota, whether it's grazing associations, county commissioners, mayors, rural residents, I think the consultation is key.

Senator HEINRICH. And part of that consultation is also those tribes that have both current and historic connections to those places as well, right?

Mr. BURGUM. Absolutely.

Senator HEINRICH. Great.

As a former outfitter guide, I am really quite excited that this Senate and this body just passed the EXPLORE Act. It's the first major piece of outdoor recreation legislation. Senator Barrasso was incredibly involved in that, as was Senator Manchin. Permitting reform was something I worked on in that piece of legislation. And it's kind of a recognition of the big economic driver of our public lands that often doesn't get the same attention that energy and other uses get. Outdoor recreation in New Mexico is responsible for something like 29,000 jobs and billions of dollars of impact. On a national scale, it's over a trillion-dollar economy.

So talk again a little bit about how we can balance those competing issues, as you did as Governor, and support that outdoor recreation economy, because it is growing and it is particularly critical to our rural gateway communities.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, first, I would just like to say this is a really important topic, but it's also a passion of mine. As someone who has spent my life as an avid outdoorsman, I was very pleased to get the full endorsement of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable for this job, which represents that trillion-dollar industry.

Senator HEINRICH. I think that's where we first met.

Mr. BURGUM. Yes, it represents all of these different aspects. And I think the opportunity for, in most states—I recognized this as Governor, and we created an Office of Outdoor Recreation while I was Governor and continue to invest, and whether that's access to fishing and hunting, public access on public lands, we have got a number of great things going on in North Dakota that we have done there that have been really helpful, including using technology. We took all the posting requirements in our state, and we got all the landowners, the pheasant hunters, all the waterfowl hunters, and got everybody to agree on that. And we created a tool where, even for hunting, you can look on your phone and find out whether the land is posted or not posted. And it might be posted no for deer hunting, yes, for pheasant hunting.

Senator HEINRICH. Right.

Mr. BURGUM. And it includes the phone number and it is posted, but if you call me and talk to me, I might let you on, but then the landowner's name and the phone number is right there. So we have been able to find tools to bring together landowners and sportsmen on both private lands as well as public lands to try to make sure that we can keep that outdoor economy rolling.

Senator HEINRICH. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Daines.

Senator DAINES. Chairman, thank you.

Governor Burgum, welcome, as well as welcome to the First Lady of North Dakota. Good to have you both here.

If confirmed, you will be eighth in line of succession of President of the United States, Governor. And that goes in line with when these departments became part of the U.S. Government. Interior goes back to 1849. And the oldest agency within Interior is the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). I think it's only fitting, before I get into my questions, my remarks, if I might submit a letter for the record from the Coalition of Large Tribes (COLT), of which three of my twelve federally recognized tribes in Montana are part of COLT. Of course, you have five federally recognized tribes and members of COLT. I just read the letter that they wrote in your support.

It says, "It has been incredible for COLT tribes to have such a close supporter nominated to the Secretary's office. He is someone in whom we have deep trust and confidence. We have gone to him with our most complex, difficult issues over many years. He is exactly the kind of leader tribes need at the Interior Department." And they close the letter by saying this, "Governor Burgum has COLT's highest recommendation and endorsement to serve as the next Secretary of the Interior."

Mr. Chairman, I would like to submit this letter for the record.

The CHAIRMAN. Without objection.

[Letter of support from COLT follows:]



COALITION OF LARGE TRIBES

Blackfeet Nation • Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe • Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation of Oregon
 Crow Nation • Eastern Shoshone Tribe • Fort Belknap Indian Community • Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nation
 Muscogee (Creek) Nation • Navajo Nation • Northern Arapaho Tribe • Oglala Sioux Tribe • Rosebud Sioux Tribe
 San Carlos Apache Tribe • Shoshone-Bannock Tribes • Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation
 Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe • Spokane Tribe • Ute Indian Tribe • Ute Mountain Ute Tribe • Walker River Paiute Tribe

January 14, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee, Chairman
 Energy and Natural Resources Committee
 363 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich, Ranking Member
 Energy and Natural Resources Committee
 709 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

I write as Chairman of the Coalition of Large Tribes (COLT)—an intertribal organization representing the interests of the more than 50 tribes with reservations of 100,000 acres or more, encompassing more than 95% of the Indian Country lands and more than half the Native American population—to deliver COLT’s enthusiastic endorsement of Governor Doug Burgum’s nomination to serve as the Secretary of the Interior.

The Secretary of the Interior is the chief steward of the trust relationship between the United States and Indian tribes. From our perspective, Governor Burgum was very successful in a similar role as Governor of North Dakota. He has been a stalwart advocate for tribes, clearly understanding and respecting tribal sovereignty. We know he cares deeply about Native American people.

It has been incredible for COLT tribes to have such a close supporter nominated to the Secretary’s Office. He is someone in whom we have deep trust and confidence. We have gone to him with our most complex, difficult issues over many years. We may not always agree, but he has always made himself personally available, meeting with tribal leadership, taking our calls, and making us feel like, as Governor, he believed he worked for our people, and indeed all of Indian Country. We know he would bring this same approach to his role as Secretary.

We also appreciate his business and leadership experience. He knows technology and he knows energy. He knows how to manage a budget and incentivize employees. He always cares deeply about people. We know many people with whom he worked over decades. He remembers their names, he asks about their families, he makes time for them even years removed from direct working relationships. He is fundamentally a good person. He is exactly the kind of leader tribes need at the Interior Department.



COALITION OF LARGE TRIBES

Blackfeet Nation • Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe • Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation of Oregon
Crow Nation • Eastern Shoshone Tribe • Fort Belknap Indian Community • Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nation
Muscogee (Creek) Nation • Navajo Nation • Northern Arapaho Tribe • Oglala Sioux Tribe • Rosebud Sioux Tribe
San Carlos Apache Tribe • Shoshone-Bannock Tribes • Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation
Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe • Spokane Tribe • Ute Indian Tribe • Ute Mountain Ute Tribe • Walker River Paiute Tribe

Governor Burgum has COLT's highest recommendation and endorsement to serve as Secretary of the Interior.

Very Respectfully,

DocuSigned by:
Chairman J. Garret Renville

EDB3CD26B0764EE...

J. Garret Renville, COLT Chairman,
Chairman of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate of the Lake Traverse Reservation, South Dakota

Senator DAINES. Governor, last week, the Fish and Wildlife Service denied Montana and Wyoming's petitions to delist the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem grizzly bears because these two populations have exceeded recovery targets by so much that the service no longer believes these two populations are even distinct. We should be celebrating the fact that the grizzly bear has recovered as an example of a great species now that has recovered and is prolific across these ecosystems. But sadly, this ruling coming out of FWS punishes Montana's successful grizzly bear recovery efforts. It's really completely backwards. We should be celebrating the recovery, but instead, we are now having to sacrifice to adjust to living with the bears, whether it's predation losses by livestock producers, as well as human safety. Sadly, many Montanans have been killed or badly mauled by grizzly bears. So the people back home take this very, very seriously. It has literally gotten the point of, along the Rocky Mountain front, west of Great Falls, where the playground at one of our schools, they have a high fence there to protect the children from grizzly bears when they go out for recess.

The Service keeps moving these goalposts for delisting and re-
turning these bears to state management, where it absolutely belongs, like we have done with the wolves. The Service set recovery numbers at 500 and 800, respectively, for the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem. The most recent estimate is now—best science—2,100 bears in these two ecosystems. Governor Burgum, would you acknowledge that the data shows the recovery of these two populations and commit to working with me to delist them?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, Senator Daines, I am aware of the data, and this is a super-important issue I know to Montanans. It's important to people also in Wyoming and Idaho. And I am with you. We should be celebrating when species come off the Endangered Species list as opposed to fighting every way we can to try to keep them on that list because, as you say, the complications. And the other thing you mentioned in your remarks is also the state. Having been a governor, I understand how dedicated the state fish and wildlife representatives are from Montana, from Wyoming, from North Dakota, South Dakota, I mean, all of the folks. As the Chair of the Western Governors' Association, I came to understand how dedicated those state officials are. I think there is a belief that when they come off of federal protection that they are unprotected. No, they are managed as they are, all the other species in the state, by the locals, who've got the closest data.

So yes, I pledge to work with you on this issue.

Senator DAINES. Thank you, Governor.

The Biden Administration has been slow-walking three critical permits for coal mines in Montana. The Bull Mountains Mine, south of Roundup, the Rosebud Mine that supplies coal for Colstrip, and the Spring Creek Mine in Southeast Montana are all in desperate need right now to finalize permits. The Bull Mountains Mine has already had to lay off hard working Montanans because the Biden Office of Surface Mining has refused to finish the needed reviews. My question is, when confirmed, will you prioritize completing these permits so Montana families don't lose their jobs?

Mr. BURGUM. Senator Daines, this is part of a larger crisis our nation is facing around electricity. We have a shortage of electricity, and especially, we have a shortage of baseload. We know that we have the technology to deliver clean coal. We are doing that in North Dakota. Senator Hoeven and others began these efforts over two decades ago. But we have an opportunity to decarbonize, produce clean coal, and with that produce reliable baseload for this country. And so, again, we absolutely would want to work with you on this issue because this is something that is critical to our national security. Without baseload, we are going to lose the AI arms race to China. And if we lose the AI arms race to China, then that has direct impacts on our national security and the future of this country.

Senator DAINES. Mr. Chairman, one just final statement to read and then I will complete my questions.

I want to quickly close by highlighting the importance of a bill that I am working on with Senator King of Maine. We co-chair the National Parks Subcommittee. We are proud of the fact that no matter which way the gavel goes—it goes back and forth over time in the U.S. Senate—Angus King and I are always co-chairs, as it were, together, on behalf of our national parks. I am working with him to reauthorize the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund. This is critical to address the deferred maintenance challenge we face with our great public lands. President Trump signed the greatest conservation bill in 50 years when he signed the Great American Outdoors Act. And I thank Vice Chairman Heinrich for helping so much in getting that across the finish line. He signed that in 2020. I hope I can count on your support for reauthorizing this program.

Mr. BURGUM. You can, absolutely. The Great American Outdoors Act, by President Trump, was a great step forward, but I know, from my own personal experience as Governor of North Dakota and working with the Theodore Roosevelt National Park, the amount of deferred maintenance that we have is probably even greater today across the park system than it was when that bill was passed. And so, we have to continue to invest in our national parks.

Senator DAINES. Great. Thank you, Governor.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Hirono.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Welcome. As part of my responsibilities to ensure the fitness of nominees before any of the committees on which I sit, I ask the following two initial questions.

First, since you became a legal adult, have you ever made unwanted requests for sexual favors or committed any verbal or physical harassment or assault of a sexual nature?

Mr. BURGUM. No, Senator, I have not.

Senator HIRONO. Have you ever faced discipline or entered into a settlement relating to this kind of conduct?

Mr. BURGUM. I have not.

Senator HIRONO. We received your testimony late yesterday, and you noted that, “President Trump’s energy dominance vision will end wars abroad.” And President Trump has directed you to expand oil and gas drilling on a massive scale, which will lead to increased burning of fossil fuels. Now, the scientific consensus is that

burning fossil fuels is a primary human cause of climate change. In 2017, then Secretary of Defense James Mattis, appointed by then President Trump, told the Senate Armed Services Committee that, “Climate change is impacting stability in areas of the world where our troops are operating.” In 2014, Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel said that climate change is a critical national security threat and a threat multiplier.

Now, these are two Secretaries of Defense. They know something about war. Were you aware that they testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee a number of times that burning more fossil fuel is actually not going to result in the end of wars, but could very well exacerbate and cause wars? Were you aware of this testimony?

Mr. BURGUM. Senator, no, I am not aware of that specific testimony, but I do know that within fossil fuels that the concern has been about emissions, and within emissions, we have the technology to do things like carbon capture to eliminate harmful emissions at the same time.

Senator HIRONO. Well, the fact on the matter is that you have military leaders who acknowledge that climate change is a major issue, and for you to take the position that you are going to engage in actions that will result in the burning of more fossil fuel, it is troubling.

As Secretary of the Interior, it is your duty to see that the Department carries out its mission to protect and manage our nation's natural resources and cultural heritage. If you are ordered by the President to act in a manner that is counter to the Department's mission, or to the Constitution, such as drilling in Bears Ears National Monument, will you do as the President asks because he wants to drill in that monument?

Mr. BURGUM. Senator, of course, as part of my sworn duty, I will follow the law and follow the Constitution, and so, you can count on that. And I haven't heard of any—

Senator HIRONO. Well—

Mr. BURGUM. Anything about President Trump wanting to do anything—

Senator HIRONO. Well, he certainly wants to—

Mr. BURGUM. Other than advancing energy production for the benefit of the American people—

Senator HIRONO. We all know that the President wants to “drill, baby, drill,” and in your testimony, you say that he has an energy dominance vision.

So I would ask you that, should you be confirmed, that you will have these kinds of matters that you will have to decide—are you going to drill in a monument? Are you going to protect our natural resources? Or are you going to drill, baby, drill? So I raise that as a concern with you going forward.

Compacts of Free Association: Last year, Congress renewed our Compacts of Free Association, and that comes within the purview of Interior. It involves Palau, Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands. I would like to get your commitment to implement the new Compacts of Free Association in accordance with the bipartisan law that was enacted last year.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, Senator, these Pacific Islands, in addition to the three that you mentioned that are part of the Compact, but also the others that are under the Insular Areas of Interior, are all critically important to national security for the United States of America. All of them have important military implications.

Senator HIRONO. Yes.

Mr. BURGUM. All of these are places where U.S. sailors fought and died during World War II. And with the aggression that China is showing in the Pacific, it is more important that we support them more than ever. I know that Hawaii plays an important role, including in things like with medical care for those residents of those islands, and I think it is important that the Federal Government does its share as opposed to putting the load on the state.

Senator HIRONO. Thank you. It sounds as though you have familiarity with the Compacts, for which I am gratified.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

Senator JUSTICE.

Senator JUSTICE. Governor Doug, First Lady Kathryn, welcome. And my questions are going to be short and sweet, but I can tell you just this, that I think we share in the fact that energy—energy is the key. Energy, oh, gosh, I don't have my mic on. Okay. Good enough, I am talking loud enough anyway.

But nevertheless, energy is such a key, such a key that opens every door, in my opinion, every single door. And the world is starving for us, America, to lead the way. And I believe we share that thought. I believe we share the thought that electricity, if we don't watch out, will become a crisis like we can't imagine, and we absolutely need to be prepared and move forward in that. But we have got a problem along the way. Permitting has gotten totally outrageous, and absolutely, we all want it to be fair and proper and not endanger our environment. We all share in that.

But absolutely, I ask you, Governor, I ask you, please, tell us your thoughts on how we are going to approach this, how we are going to approach the issues with fish and wildlife and on and on and on. Please tell us.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, I should say, Governor—now Senator—so great that you are here in the Senate, and what a fantastic job you did as Governor, and it was a pleasure serving alongside of you as another energy state. You have got everything, just—you get that we are in an energy crisis in our country, and the first place is actually related to electricity. Electricity is at the brink. Our grid is at a point where it could go completely unstable. We could be just months away from having skyrocketing prices for Americans. And of course, as we talked about in the AI arms race, we need electricity for manufacturing, and AI is manufacturing intelligence. And if we don't manufacture more intelligence than our adversaries, that affects every job, every company, and every industry. You understand this and we have got to get to work.

The permitting, right now, in some of the queues in FERC for electricity, it's seven years or longer. And it's a completely—that queue in FERC is 95 percent intermittent sources and only five percent baseload. We need baseload to be able to allow the renewables to be part of the system. We have got to have the balance

between those two, or the grid, which is like a giant machine, just doesn't work. And so, we have got to get to work, and permitting reform and speeding permitting, right now, we have stacked the deck where we are creating roadblocks for people that want to do baseload, and we have got massive tax incentives for people that want to do intermittent and unreliable, when the balance is out of whack, and we have got to bring it back in line. And we can do that and still achieve the objectives that we want to have about having a cleaner environment, because the U.S. has done that. We are the one nation on the planet that has actually reduced CO₂ over the last 20 years. We are the ones that have done it. China has doubled their CO₂ emissions in the same time frame.

Senator JUSTICE. Well, thank you, sir and thank you for your kind comments as well.

Now, if I could just ask one more question and just shift just a little bit. We all know the outdoors touches our soul, and I am an outdoorsman like crazy. I have enjoyed hunting and fishing all across this nation, but especially in my home State of West Virginia. And I welcome you to come to West Virginia to experience that—just what I am speaking of. But I would just say just this—we have an attack on our sport of hunting and fishing. You know, hunters absolutely do so much to contribute to all the goodness, all across all of our lands, to all the wildlife, to all the different things that happen within the sport of hunting. And I know you share, you know, my love, just as much as I do.

With all that being said, what will you do to ensure that we will perpetuate this unbelievable tradition to our youth, to our youth and all those to come? What will you do, sir?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, Senator, in North Dakota, we have taken steps, as I know other states have done, to create youth hunting seasons, youth hunter education, make it more available, create more opportunities, as we have also done for disabled and wounded veterans, but when we have public lands and we have public access, the greatest conservationists in our country—and some are probably listening today—but whether it's the, you know, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Mule Deer, Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, you name any of these organizations, they are the ones that raise the money that actually pour dollars into conservation in this country. Hunters, Safari Club, all of these different groups, and of course, President Roosevelt—Theodore Roosevelt—is one of the founders of Boone and Crockett. I mean, he was a hunter who also set the ethic for conservation for our country.

And so, these two things go hand-in-hand. You cannot separate hunting from the love of outdoors, respect for wildlife, and dollars that flow back into habitat and making sure that we have got the privilege of hunting for the public. It doesn't matter who you are. In North Dakota, you can get a \$20 tag and go on a hunt that is just as amazing as if you were, you know, going to Africa. I mean, it is a miracle that we have in this country, one of the few countries that has that, something we have to fight to protect to preserve.

Senator JUSTICE. Thank you, sir. And I have only got just one other comment. You know, President Trump is bringing to us

amazing nominees, but in my book, this man, you know, just think just for one second—he is super smart. His track record is unbelievable. He has experience off the chart. If anybody is the pick of the litter, it has got to be this man. He has done an amazing job, but he has got courage like you can't imagine. Just think about this: he stood on one leg at the debate and absolutely, with a torn Achilles, and I have been a coach forever in basketball, and I have seen kids get a torn Achilles, and absolutely, it is one serious injury. How you did this, I will never know, but nevertheless, I give him kudos for courage beyond belief. Thank you so much, sir.

Mr. BURGUM. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Maybe you will tell us that someday. I assume it involved just biting on a leather strap until moments before you walked on the debate stand, but we can save that for another day.

Senator King.

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I associate myself with the comments about sportsmen. Just several weeks ago, I accepted the chairmanship of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, which I am greatly honored to do and look forward to working with you on those issues. I have visited your wonderful state, camped there, visited Minot with Senator Cramer, and I must say, Minot is the flattest place I have ever been in my life. One of the locals said the good thing about it is, if your dog runs away, you can still see him after three days.

[Laughter.]

Senator KING. And I also want to compliment you. A lot of people talk about an all-of-the-above energy strategy. You did it. You implemented it in North Dakota. Over 30 percent—36 percent of your electricity comes from wind. And I hope one of the projects you might undertake when and if you are confirmed is to convince your boss that wind power is not all bad. He is well known for his opposition to wind power, but you know that the benefits are there. Of course, baseload is also important. Storage is important to balance the grid. I understand that. But coming from a state where 35, 36 percent of your electricity came from wind, I hope you can talk to the President about the fact that wind has its virtues and can contribute significantly because we are, as you note, facing a huge energy challenge over the next 15 to 20 years to support the knowledge economy.

Will you undertake that project?

Mr. BURGUM. Senator King, certainly you have got great wind resources in Maine. We have got good wind resources in North Dakota. Not every state is lucky to have the resources that we do, where the wind, well, maybe that flat ground helps us on that—very few trees to stop the wind. But I would say the key here, you mentioned it, it is baseload versus the intermittent, because we have got to have the right balance and we maybe have tipped a little too far in one direction. So I think that is the key piece for us, the key short-term emergency.

Senator KING. But you do see the value of wind power? A third of your state's electricity comes from that source.

Mr. BURGUM. Yes, and most of that we export, and so, I think our neighbors are happy to have that. But I would also say that,

again, we need an all-of-the-above strategy. It's what we have had in North Dakota.

Senator KING. And a balanced grid.

Mr. BURGUM. It's a balance, but we need more. We need more, and the thing we are short of most right now is baseload.

Senator KING. Well, Maine has an asset similar to yours, offshore. And the Department of the Interior executed several leases recently. I hope I can have your commitment to continue with those leases. They will produce enough energy for all the homes in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. It's an enormous resource in the Gulf of Maine that can provide significant energy. As you may know, the capacity factor of offshore wind is significantly higher than terrestrial wind. So I hope that your Department will continue with the projects that were already underway. Will you commit to that?

Mr. BURGUM. I am not familiar with every project that the Interior has underway, but I will certainly be taking a look at all of those, and if they make sense and they are already in law, then they will continue. I think the key is, and I think President Trump has been very clear in his statements, that he is concerned about the significant amount of tax incentives that have gone toward some forms of energy that have helped exacerbate this imbalance that we are seeing right now, today.

Senator KING. You talked briefly to some of the other questions about permitting reform, and I was involved in the discussions with Senator Barrasso, Senator Manchin, and others about the permitting bill that, unfortunately, we couldn't get across the goal line at the end of last Congress. I presume that permitting reform not only is for generation projects, but transmission. Do you appreciate the difficulty of permitting transmission assets, particularly in the West?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, yes and I think that this is one of the challenges of our time, and it's one of the challenges that we need to undertake, because whether it's a transmission line, a pipeline, whatever it happens to be trying to get built, it just takes too long in our country. And if we don't have—it's one thing to be able to generate that electricity—but if we don't have the ability to transmit it to the places where it's needed, that is going to be a problem.

Senator KING. Exactly.

Senator Daines has already mentioned the America the Beautiful Act that he and I have introduced. It's a refresh of the Great American Outdoors Act, one of the most successful initiatives of the Trump Administration. I remember working with Secretary Zinke on that project. So I am gratified to hear your support for that proposal.

A final point we talked about is the backlog of maintenance in the national parks and public lands. One of the problems is, the Department has chronically underfunded maintenance on an ongoing basis. In other words, we are being asked to fix a backlog that, frankly, should not have existed. And I hope that you will work with the National Park Service and the Office of Management and Budget to be sure that a sufficient fund is allocated to ongoing maintenance so we don't continue to dig the hole deeper.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, I agree with you on that. And this is one of the things, when I came in as a business guy into government, I was shocked to find out that we, in North Dakota, did not have appropriate formulas for funding deferred maintenance. I mean, everyone was happy to approve appropriations to build new buildings, but it was tough to get a dime to take care of the ones we already have. And I think this is something we are going to have to take a look at procedurally within Interior. I know that we have got over, you know, 2,400 locations, I am told, in terms of where we have people stationed.

Senator KING. Right.

Mr. BURGUM. We just have to make sure that not just the national parks, but across the whole Department, but we have got to get the formulas right because we are creating liabilities for future generations if we are not taking care of that deferred maintenance.

Senator KING. I can tell you that the formula right now is not right. So I encourage you to take that step. Thank you very much, Governor, for joining us, and we look forward to hearing from you further in this hearing.

Thank you.

Mr. BURGUM. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator McCormick.

Senator MCCORMICK. Governor, good to see you. Kathryn, good to see you. We had a great meeting, I guess a week or two ago, and I promise to visit the baddest Badlands in the Dakotas. I am looking forward to that. And I know we have all these energy-state governors here, but in Pennsylvania, we like to think that the path to energy dominance goes through the Keystone State, so I am so glad to have you here before us today.

When we met, we talked about an energy and innovation summit that I am planning to do later this year where we bring in energy companies, AI companies, as well as big investors, and an opportunity to really celebrate and also make more progress on President Trump's vision of energy dominance. I was happy to talk to you about that, and look forward to working with you and Secretary Wright on that, and just hoping I can start with getting your support to work with me closely on that and make that a reality.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, I think it's a great idea, Senator. And I think it is absolutely true, the Keystone State is the key, and there is such a resource there. I mean wow, so few Americans understand that Pennsylvania is now producing 20 percent of our nation's natural gas. And of course, the fact that innovators in the private sector invested—the whole shale revolution that got created in this country has been a miracle. I mean, we went from being one of the largest importers of energy to one of the largest exporters. And at the time, you know, Russia, you know, they ran a campaign with all of the CyOps they have—we can't be naïve. You know, they pounded Europe for ten years of getting everybody in Europe and Germany to shut down all their baseload so they could buy natural gas from Russia, then they invade—Russia invades Ukraine. The price goes up. Russia makes bank like they have never made before and they are funding a war against us. Germany then rushes to try to reopen their baseload power plants. They are doing all that.

If America hadn't come to the rescue with LNG exports from our country to Western Europe, this thing could have escalated even beyond the tragedy that we see today in Ukraine.

Senator MCCORMICK. I couldn't agree more, and that really relates to my second question, which is, Pennsylvania, as you mentioned, the second largest natural gas producer, and yet, America's allies, even states across our great country cannot get access to LNG. So we need to really expand LNG exports, and that would be a huge win and create a lot of great jobs for Americans and a lot of great jobs for Pennsylvania. So as Chair of the National Energy Dominance Council, how will you work with the Administration to increase natural gas production and get new export terminals online in places like Pennsylvania as quickly as possible?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, of course, I learned in the private sector, in public companies you don't want to make forward-looking statements, and the Energy Council is yet to be created—hopefully by an EO, you know, early in this Administration. But one thing I would say that's not a forward-looking statement, it's just a fact, and I talked about it with Senator King, but you know, we have got, you know, 80 percent of the homes in Maine are still heating their homes with heating oil. It's 41 percent in New Hampshire. And we cannot get a pipeline with clean U.S. natural gas into New England to states like, you know, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine?

And at the time of the Russian invasion, not only had Western Europe become dependent, we were offloading, you know, hundreds of thousands of barrels of dirty Russian heating oil into New England.

Senator MCCORMICK. Boston Harbor, right?

Mr. BURGUM. Yeah, so, I mean, it's like we have a national security issue and we have got to be able to get clean U.S. energy to every state. We need the transportation networks, whether it's pipelines or transmission lines to do that. We can't be—at a time of global risk like we are now in global national security—in a position where we are exposed to supply chains that depend on our adversaries, whether it's critical minerals with China or whether it's heating oil from Russia or uranium from Russia, we cannot be dependent on them. We have got the resources here. We need to develop them.

Senator MCCORMICK. You know, like many energy-producing states, Pennsylvania has thousands of orphaned wells that need to be plugged. Many states have programs to plug these wells that have worked pretty well over many years. I am concerned that the federal funding that is available for that is being held up for a number of these projects because of red tape. And so, as Secretary, will you streamline these requirements so states like mine can quickly access the much-needed funding to plug these wells?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, this is a—I don't want to say a passion project, because I am passionate about a lot of things—but the federal legislation which was put in place after the pandemic was modeled after something we created in North Dakota, and I want to thank Senator Hoeven and Senator Cramer for their work on doing that. Pennsylvania, of course, you guys have been producing and drilling oil wells since the 1880s. North Dakota's first one

wasn't until 1951, so ours were all easier to track. We have got ours down now in North Dakota to under 200, and there are other states that have tens of thousands of abandoned orphaned wells. And this is something from an environmental standpoint that we have got to take care of. The technology is there. We can clean it up. And there are ways to do that and it can be, you know, great for the local economy, great for Reclamation. There is a way to do it. I have got a lot of knowledge in this area and you can count on my support to make sure that we have got a program to take care of this.

Senator MCCORMICK. I look forward to working with you on that.

Mr. BURGUM. Part of it, you know, the U.S. can be energy dominant, but we have to maintain the path which we are on. We do it cleaner, safer, and smarter than anybody else in the world, and we have to maintain that.

Senator MCCORMICK. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cortez Masto.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Thank you.

Governor, good to see you again. Thank you for meeting with me. Welcome to your wife, Kathryn. It's a good name. Thank you very much.

We talked a little bit about this, but I want to bring this to the public as well because Senator Lee and I do have a lot in common when it comes to our public lands, and most of the lands in the state of Nevada, about 85 percent, are owned by the Federal Government. And he is right, we have to manage not only our housing issues, but economic development, unlike some of the states—your state, where you own most of the land. And so, we are always looking for that partnership with our federal partners. And Nevada has a successful track record when it comes to bringing different parties together to create that balance of releasing public land for that needed development, conserving lands, addressing various land management needs. And an example of that collaboration is my Southern Nevada lands bill. And so, I am hopeful that, based on your comments already to my colleagues, that you believe in a balanced land use, and that the key to that is local consultation and state consultation. I agree. So I am hoping that you will be willing to work with us as we address, in Nevada, our housing needs, which is an issue, as well as economic development, and work with me on my Southern Nevada lands bill and other lands bills in the State of Nevada. Would you commit to doing that?

Mr. BURGUM. Yes, absolutely, Senator. I know that you, other than Alaska, you guys are in the top of the list in terms of having the most amount of federal land. You have some of the same challenges around affordable housing that Senator Lee is seeing in Utah, with the great success of population growth in Southern Nevada, and I think, again, there are some creative ideas about land exchanges.

You have thought through it. I can tell. I would look forward to working with you.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. Thank you. I appreciate that.

I also want to touch on a comment that you made that tax incentives going toward some forms of energy creates an imbalance for baseload. That's what I have heard you say, and you made that

comment when we were together as well. Let me ask you this, because in Nevada, it is important for us to absolutely have an opportunity to support public-private partnerships in clean energy. I would imagine you support public-private partnerships?

Mr. BURGUM. Oh, I think it's great whenever we can get more market incentives built into programs, or if we spend a tax dollar, if we can match it with two or three from the private sector. That is one of the things we did in North Dakota to really, you know, both grow our economy and extend the return on investment for every taxpayer dollar invested.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. And I appreciate that. And so, with that said, there is a role for the Federal Government to be a part of incentivizing and supporting those public-private partnerships. Would you agree with that?

Mr. BURGUM. Yes, where appropriate, absolutely.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. All right. And in Nevada, because of the Inflation Reduction Act, as well as the Bipartisan Infrastructure package, we have benefited, not only in Nevada with jobs and growing our economy, but in contributing to our national security in bringing back manufacturing to this country because we have critical mineral mining going on in Nevada thanks to those pieces of legislation. We have the complete ecosystem for battery—not only manufacturing, but storage and recycling as well. And our energy now is both gas as well as solar. Solar is really one of the number one areas that we have in the state for our energy needs, and that is why battery storage is important.

So let me ask you this, and maybe I am wrong about this, but isn't the combination of renewables plus battery storage baseload?

Mr. BURGUM. Yes, that is certainly the future, and again, as I said before, all of the above. We need all forms of electricity. We are short of electricity in this country. We just have to make sure that we have the balance because if we don't have the baseload, the intermittent—and I will call it unreliable, because the sun doesn't always shine and the wind doesn't always blow. Until we get storage, and storage is still a few years out to where we are going to be able to operate it at grid scale to be able to make that work—until we get to that time, we really have to have two systems. We have to—

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. I agree, but if we don't have the incentives continue that kind of research and making sure that is happening, because it's happening in Nevada right now—storage.

Mr. BURGUM. Yes.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. I have been to the facilities. We see it. If we don't have those incentives, then we are never going to get there. And so, my concern is, and what I am hearing is, under this Administration, a shift from those incentives for renewables back to fossil fuels. And that is not going to do any of us, really, in this country a benefit to—at the end of the day, leaning into clean energy, being dominant in that space of clean energy, protecting our national security when it comes to that clean energy as well. So I do think there is a balanced approach here, but not one at the expense of another. And I am hopeful, based on your experience as a governor, and what I just heard, and I know about your state because you found that balanced approach for energy, and every state

is going to be different based on their geography, that you are going to work with states as well and not take away an opportunity where they can have that balanced approach for energy.

Would you be willing to do that, even stand up to the Administration, when it somehow is not a benefit, what they are trying to do to a state, like the state of Nevada? My Republican governor and I are in lock-step when it comes to moving forward in this space.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, there are certainly big opportunities in Nevada, whether it's solar, geothermal—there are a lot of opportunities—critical minerals—lots of things to work on. But I would say that the benefit to every American is, if we have baseload that's reliable that works, that's part of how we have affordability. I mean, every American today is paying more for their electricity than they were before. So the current policy is hurting every American. It hasn't happened yet, but it's coming soon—more and more brownouts and blackouts because we aren't going to have the balance on the grid. And I think every senator and every governor is going to be hearing from every consumer. And so, this is something we have to work on together as a priority to make sure that we restore a balance to the grid, and that means that we, like you said, when you take a look at a FERC queue that has got 95 percent intermittent and unreliable, that probably tells us we are a little bit out of balance. And we just have to bring it back and then keep moving forward.

But great opportunities to work with you in Nevada. You have got some special opportunities and resources. And I would say critical minerals, which you mentioned, I am glad you brought them up, but you know, in the IRA, we, you know, passed all kinds of incentives for electric vehicles at a time when China is controlling 85 percent of the critical minerals in the world. So I mean, incenting something which increases our dependence on a major adversary, because we are in a cold war with China, and we are in a cyber war every day with them. I mean, right now, we are in a cyber war with them, North Korea, Russia, Iran. Every day we are being attacked by these folks.

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. So you don't support the credits for electric vehicles, and that would be something that you would support the Administration repealing?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, I support economics and markets, and if you add up the EV totals, it's over \$900 per ton of CO₂ avoided. And in North Dakota, we can give you a liquid fuel with zero carbon in it for 60 bucks. And so, we are doing that today with carbon sequestration for biofuels and so it's like—

Senator CORTEZ MASTO. I know my time is up, and I look forward to talking to you about this, but thank you, I appreciate it.

Mr. BURGUM. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Hoeven.

Senator HOEVEN. I think that interchange demonstrates the kind of really high-level discussion that Governor Burgum brings to these issues. I mean, he really will work through these issues, and applies a real analytical approach to problem solving. I think that is really important for both sides of the aisle. I think that is something that people are going to very much appreciate about him.

Federal law requires that on public lands there be multiple use. Recently, the BLM promulgated rules that violate that law, very clearly, in my opinion. Do you support multiple use on federal lands? And I know you do, but I want you to express it for the record, and then I want you to tell us why it's so important that we have multiple use on public lands, not just in our state, but across this country.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, thank you, Senator Hoeven. The answer is obviously yes, but this is the public lands, and particularly when we talk about aspects of BLM, this is essential to local economies, and whether that is, you know, grazing rights that were a part of this, whether it's recreation opportunities and access, whether it's timber, or whether it's oil and gas and mineral production that supports local economies and supports our country, this land was put away for the benefit, the use, and the enjoyment of the American people. Not every acre of federal land is a national park or a wilderness area. Some of those areas we have to absolutely protect for their precious stuff, but the rest of it, this is America's balance sheet, and I think every American during a Presidential campaign finds out, and gets pounded into their head that we have got \$36 trillion in debt. We have got all this debt. We have all this debt. Oh, Americans, you owe part of this national debt—\$36 trillion. This is on you. We never talk about the assets, and the assets are the land and minerals.

This agency, the Department of the Interior, has got close to 500 million acres of surface, 700 million acres of subsurface, and over two billion acres of offshore—two billion. That is the balance sheet of America. And if we were a company, they would look at us and say, wow, you are really restricting your balance sheet and do you know what those assets are worth? We don't. I believe we ought to have a deep inventory of all the assets in America. We ought to understand, maybe, what are our assets—\$100 trillion, \$200 trillion? We could be in great shape as a country, but then, if you said, wow, if we had \$200 trillion in assets just sitting there, but we restrict access, we don't cut a tree, you know, we don't use them for recreation, and then we don't develop the minerals sustainably and in a smart way, then we are getting super-low return for the American people. It is our responsibility to get a return for the American people when we do that.

When we did that in North Dakota, you started it as Governor, and on the Land Board we have got, in our little state, we have got a \$12 billion endowment for K-12 for about 125,000 kids. I mean, we had an endowment bigger than most universities in the country for our K-12 system because we learned how to utilize this stuff. And guess what? We still have among the cleanest air, cleanest water, greatest recreation in the nation. This is the time of abundance. We can do all of it.

Senator HOEVEN. Yeah, and so, it really is about working with people in all these different uses. And that is true with working in Indian Country on the reservations as well, right? Empowering the local tribe, you know, to make those decisions about how they use the land and all the beneficial ways that they can, right?

Mr. BURGUM. Yes, well, in our state, I mean, MHA Nation, the Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, the Three Affiliated Tribes, one of the

great energy tribes in our country. These guys have, I say, the hardest job in America. It's not being a governor or a senator—the hardest job in America is a tribal chairman because you get a whole other layer of federal bureaucracy on top of you, and they show up at MHA and they say, hey, you guys are doing too much flaring. And then they say, well, we wouldn't be if you would give us a permit to actually do a gas gathering line. So the same government that tells them that they are flaring too much won't give them the permit to do the thing that we can do in the rest of the state. So they get constrained.

Senator HOEVEN. In addition to serving as Secretary of Interior, there is also the role as the leader of the National Energy Council—very important. Talk for a minute, for the time we have left, and maybe even go over a little bit—the Chairman is really a good guy. So talk about how you implement a game plan to achieve that goal of energy dominance that President Trump wants for this nation.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, again, I think I don't want to get caught in making forward-looking statements because the council will be formed by an EO, but I think that the intention that you can read in President Trump's public statements is very simple. He wants to cut red tape. He wants to have more affordable energy for us. He wants to sell energy to our friends and allies so they don't have to buy it from our adversaries. That is how we reduce tensions in the world. And then, we have got to make sure that we are doing it in a smart way because he talks all the time about clean air and clean water.

So he basically is talking about the approach that we are talking about here at this Committee. This Committee will be deeply involved in helping set those policies, but it's an all-of-the-above, go get it done and stop getting in the way of ourselves, and particularly, with this AI—the AI battle. People don't understand that what is coming right now with the AI revolution is going to happen during President Trump's term, where when we have generalized intelligence that we can manufacture, it's going to affect our ability to compete with every other power. And China, they permitted more than two coal plants a week in the first half of 2023 and they are already the world's largest emitter.

So we are competing against someone who is going to create more electricity, produce more AI, and this could be how we lose the cold war with them if we don't get enough. We have to do it here. And we are a country that believes in reclamation. We believe in following labor laws. China—child labor, no reclamation, no care about the environment. They are a tough competitor right now in terms of their ability to produce electricity. So we have got to get going. We have to cut red tape. And we have got to realize that if you shut down U.S. energy production here, it doesn't help the global environment. That's a false trade-off. It doesn't help because somebody else produces it someplace else less cleanly than we do.

Senator HOEVEN. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cantwell.

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Governor Burgum, congratulations on your nomination, and I hope to run

through a couple of questions here. So help me out in your brevity, if possible.

I know you have already—I know the Ranking Member, anyway, and maybe even the Chairman, brought up our beautiful outdoor economy, which we have heard from your Senator that apparently, you are a big outdoorsman yourself. But not only will you become steward of over 20 percent of the land in the United States, but some of the most beautiful, iconic places in America, and these are an economic juggernaut. They are in my state, if you think about Mount Rainier or Olympic National Park or the Hanford Reach or many other places. The outdoor recreation economy generates \$1.2 trillion in economic output every year—\$1.2 trillion—and accounts for five million jobs, and I believe, continues to grow at an incredible clip that when you think about economic development in some of our more rural communities, it doesn't take a lot to add a little bit of infrastructure and then the next thing you know, you are off to the races as to making a tourism and an economic impact to these economies. I think in North Dakota it was your third largest industry, generating \$1 billion and 14,000 jobs, and you actually created an Office of Outdoor Recreation. Good for you—good for you.

So I think you get it. But now when we talk about oil, first of all—well, first, I want to make sure on the public lands, will you support more input in outdoor recreation economies and gateway communities, and will you fully utilize the LWCF and support the conservation legacy bills that we have passed?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, of course. First of all, in your comments on outdoor recreation, I agree completely on the importance of this. And it's not only good for the economy, it's also good for the health of Americans. I mean, I think one thing that we understand is that we just need more people to get off their devices, get outdoors, get engaged, understand the importance of our land, our wildlife, our soil health, all of the aspects of it. And again, you know, we are facing a mental health and addiction crisis in our country, and part of the answer is, for many people, is that, you know, getting that connection back to the outdoors. So I support that completely, and would look forward to working with you on your other issues as well.

Senator CANTWELL. Great. So you support the LWCF that we passed in continuing to support those funds?

Mr. BURGUM. Some of those acronyms I am less familiar with, so I would look forward to learning more about them, but—

Senator CANTWELL. Okay, well, we will get you a question for the record.

Mr. BURGUM. Okay.

Senator CANTWELL. Because it's vitally important, we believe. We think we broke through finally, and the reason why I am asking this is because this is a lead up to the next question.

Mr. BURGUM. Okay.

Senator CANTWELL. You are for this very aggressive oil and lease strategy, I think, or maybe you are going to take this helm over, you know, with a group of people and say we need to do more on oil and gas. Part of our efforts have been to show that these federal lands are very important in an outdoor economy. And so, how

many areas that we have already leased for oil and gas that aren't being used, why don't we start there? Why don't we just start with those, the leases that are already there? Why don't we start with that?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, I think I wouldn't use the term that I was for aggressive, I have never stated that. I am for following the law. In the current Administration, in North Dakota, for the first time since Harry Truman, the quarterly lease sales were not held, as required by law. It didn't happen for two years. We ended up having to sue the Federal Government just to follow the law. So I think the starting place is for us to go back to, you know, following the law on these. And then again, we always want to prioritize those areas that have the most resource opportunity for America with the least impact on lands that are important. And I think that is a pretty simple formula to be able to figure that out, given the scale of the amount of public lands we have. We can do a lot more without touching or even being visible to any of the people that are concerned about land use.

Senator CANTWELL. So you would prioritize the existing leases?

Mr. BURGUM. I am not sure if I understand the—

Senator CANTWELL. A juxtapose to this conversation, which we have had many times in this Committee—oh, let's expand more leases, you know, that we don't have right now. I am sure the Chairman would probably, we could get into a very long discussion here about Bears Ears, particularly. I wasn't for expanding oil and gas leasing into Bears Ears. It's a beautiful, protected area. I personally think that the outdoor economy is a juggernaut. I don't want offshore drilling off the coast of Washington. I have got a marine sanctuary. Why in God's name—I have Cascadia fault line. I mean, I could have devastation to an economy that is paying dividends. Why would I want to do that?

So I am just saying one of the things that would be helpful to hear from you is that you believe in prioritizing on federal land the leases that are already there as opposed to now going and saying, okay, let's get a big map and open up all federal land to new leasing, because your point about efficiency—the most efficient thing is to go after what you already have.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, I am going to have to, before I can make an affirmative statement that I agree with you, would have to understand, because what I have seen in my time as Governor is not that we have existing, but we are actually restricting legal access for development or timber or oil and gas or whatever on public lands today—

Senator CANTWELL. Okay.

Mr. BURGUM [continuing]. By illegally not holding the lease sales that should have been held. So I am not even—I am not—

Senator CANTWELL. Okay, my time is up, and I am now in the red. So I am going to get cut off here. But I will submit something for you for the record on that. I am sure I will submit something on fire and CLT and maybe you and I can have a discussion about what I think really would help us move forward on some of those issues.

But I also, just for the record, on tribal sovereignty, you believe in tribal sovereignty, you believe in tribal consultation, which

doesn't mean you just pick up the phone and have one conversation. Tribal consultation means you actually—when the Federal Government says, hey, so much money needs to go to tribes, that you actually figure out the plan for that to happen.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, tribal consultation to me as Governor of North Dakota has meant actually spending time, going to the tribes, listening, sometimes listening for hours to really understand what the issues are and then in getting to the people ahead of time and then working on things that are important. We achieved MOUs on law enforcement. I mean, some of the scarcest and most devastating law enforcement in this country right now is the lack of BIA agents on federal land. I mean, some of the tribal reservations have become harbors for criminal organizations because they know that we don't have enough resource there and then our local county sheriffs to state police, in many cases, didn't have jurisdiction. That is just one. Healthcare is another. I mean—

Senator CANTWELL. Yes, thank you. I'm sorry. The Chairman is going to cut me off. But thank you so much for that answer. I appreciate it. That is kind of stewardship we need with our partnership between us and Indian Country. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

We are going to go to Senator Murkowski now. I do want to interject here. There is no significant oil in the Bears Ears. There is no plan to drill for oil in the Bears Ears. I am not aware of any significant oil reserves. Look, there are cattle that graze in that area. There are recreation purposes. There are some other things that go on there. I don't know who came up with this idea that somebody is getting ready to drill in the Bears Ears National Monument. It's paranoid fantasy. That's not a thing.

The dispute here is about the process by which it was designated—unilateral Presidential action taken without consultation, and to the extent there was any input, it was negative input, but it affected local people in a way that affects their access to recreation, their ability to continue to graze their cattle as they have, and other reasons. So let's just keep those facts straight.

Senator Murkowski.

Senator CANTWELL. Happy news to hear that you don't want to drill there.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, yes, I mean, there is no oil there, so.

Senator Murkowski.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Well, we got oil.

[Laughter.]

Senator MURKOWSKI. We got oil.

Mr. BURGUM. Yes, you do.

Senator MURKOWSKI. It's good to see you and it's good to have these robust conversations. As you and I discussed, part of our challenge in Alaska is not lack of resource, whether it is oil or gas, coal, whether it's our renewables with everything from, yes, wind, the geothermal, even solar, yes, tidal power, we have got it all, but our big challenge, as you know, is access. And it has been noted that there are several states where the Department of the Interior has probably a disproportionate impact. It doesn't do my heart any good to oftentimes refer to the Secretary of Interior as Alaska's landlord. But we pretty much have to go to Interior to ask for per-

mission to do anything. And this is regardless of what our statehood compact says, regardless of ANILCA, ANCSA, the laws that have a direct impact to us.

So it's good to be able to have a conversation with you as the nominee for the Department of the Interior and knowing that you have the scope of knowledge and experience that you bring to these issues. I love the fact that you are talking about America's balance sheet, including assets that we have, such as lands and minerals. Part of the challenge that we have in Alaska is that oftentimes when we talk about our nation's inventory of assets, we are not on the map. We are not included in the surveys. And we are told, well, it's going to be hard to assess that. Well, yes, but look at it from the business perspective. Just because it's hard to assess your assets, you think you are going to keep them off of that ledger, off that balance sheet? So as we are talking about these, recognize that we not only have what we know we have, we probably have three, and four, and five, and ten times more. We just need to be able to do that assessment. So I am looking forward to that kind of engagement with you.

We have a lot of work to do with the Department of the Interior. You and I have had a chance to go over many of these issues. But again, so much of it is about access. And the first question that I am going to ask—or the first commitment that I am going to ask of you—is one that I can guarantee that nobody around the panel has mentioned, and this has to do with polar bears. The Biden Administration has done a lot of things that most Alaskans don't appreciate, and last week we added another thing to the list. We learned Interior is not going to finish its revised incidental take regulations, these ITRs, for North Slope activities. And it's going to leave this very routine renewal of current letters of authorization as unfinished business.

Well, when you leave those authorizations as unfinished business, it means that the business of what is going on in the North Slope is put on pause, put on hold. So I need your commitment that you will work with Alaskans, particularly the Iñupiat people up there, the North Slope Borough up there, on basically all things polar bear.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, I will be happy to do that, and as you know better than anyone, Senator, I think close to half of the land and subsurface and offshore that Interior controls is in Alaska.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Yes.

Mr. BURGUM. So you can't—Interior, you may view as a landlord, but I would view Alaska as one of the biggest assets this country has and one of the biggest responsibilities of Interior, and I look forward to working with you.

Senator MURKOWSKI. That is exactly what I was hoping you would say, recognizing the—really, the significance there. And I don't want the Department of the Interior to be a landlord. I want you to be a partner. I want you to be a partner with us as we determine how we achieve the balance that we talk about in this Committee, because we are just as proud of our outdoor activities. You have had an opportunity, firsthand. I love your story about the time that you spent in Alaska. We, of course, welcome you back anytime, all the time. But we have been able to access our re-

sources, whether it's timber, or whether it's oil, and still provide for a place that most would say, this is a "where I want to go before I die" type of location. So I think we are doing something right there.

I need to alert you, as well as my colleagues, and when we talk about abundance, we have it in Alaska, but when you can't access it—we are now in a situation in my state, in the South Central portion, where pretty much 75 to 80 percent of the people actually are living in this region where the energy, the natural gas that we have been relying on out of Cook Inlet, is dwindling in its supply. We are talking, as we speak, about building an import terminal to import liquefied natural gas from Canada to keep the lights on and to keep homes warm in Alaska, where we have unquantifiable reserves of natural gas. We just need to figure out how we are going to be able to commercialize this. So we need the help to unleash the opportunities that we have, to only allow Alaska to have that energy independence that we so rightfully should have, but also to be able to help not only our country, but our friends and allies.

And we have had plenty of time to talk about it. My time is expired. I am hoping we are going to have another round because I don't want to submit questions for the record to you. I want the opportunity to just be able to put it out on the record now. So, good to be able to welcome you here. You didn't have to answer any of that, but I just need you to come back to Alaska soon.

Mr. BURGUM. Okay, I look forward to that.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Hickenlooper.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. You know, I am going to yield to the Senior Senator from California because he has got a thing on the floor he has got to do.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Padilla.

Senator PADILLA. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Governor, good to see you again. I appreciate the time in my office a few weeks back, and greetings to your wife, Kathryn. We can't do the jobs that we do without the support and love of our spouses.

My time is limited. Not sure if we will have a second round. There are a number of issues that I am going to try to get to. If I don't, I will be submitting questions for the record. Issues like tribal sovereignty—that has come up before, and your thoughts on our trust and treaty obligations as a country. Public lands—we have had some recent progress and exciting announcements in California that we would like to continue to build on and not go backwards on trying to get to some water system.

But let me begin with some of the more urgent questions and issues in California. Los Angeles, specifically, as we have all seen the devastation of recent fires in Southern California. As we speak here today, more than 40,000 acres burned, 12,000 structures plus destroyed, more than two dozen people who have perished—that number is probably going to grow. It has been one of the most destructive natural disasters in Los Angeles history. As Governor, you had an experience, not at this scale, but in 2024, you requested a major disaster declaration to assist in the recovery from historic wildfires that ravaged across Northwest North Dakota. And Presi-

dent Biden, as I understand it, approved it quickly and without conditions. Is that correct?

Mr. BURGUM. Yes.

Senator PADILLA. So do you believe federal disaster aid should come with or without conditions?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, I think each situation would vary. But first of all, let me just say that I want to extend, on behalf of Kathryn and I, you know, our empathy and sympathy to anybody that has lost their home, lost their lives, lost a loved one. We have friends that have lived in the area that have lost their homes, the homes they raised their kids in for 30 years, every piece of memorabilia and memory that they had, gone, only getting out with the shirt on their back, in talking to those individuals directly. And as it happens, our daughter was in LA for an event. The event was canceled. Kathryn had flown out there, so both of them also had to evacuate as the fires were encroaching in that part of the city. So our family, part of our family, saw it firsthand. And again, it's just—urban wildfire is something that we, as a country, we need to think, and I say each situation is different because where you talked about in North Dakota, it was largely rural, largely grasslands—very, very different.

Senator PADILLA. And we have experienced both, but please extend my offer to support assistance in any way, any of my constituents that are friends or relatives of your family.

For the record, there have never been strings attached to disaster relief, and I certainly hope this is not the first case. So I would ask, as this plays out in Congress over the next several months, if you are fortunate enough to be confirmed as Interior Secretary, and you wouldn't be the one deciding on whether or not to grant disaster declarations, but the Department is significant, particularly when it comes to wildfire response. Would you commit to responding to every disaster with as much support and resources possible, regardless of which state or jurisdiction the disaster is in?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, absolutely, but I would say I would go a step further, which is we have got to commit to—and maybe it's going to take, you know, apparently the fire in Maui was not big enough in a sense—I mean, that was horrible—100-plus lives lost, the devastation that is there, but it did not create a response nationally or at the federal level or a collaboration of states, but with this incredible, you know, the largest ever. And when the dollars come up, this could be the most expensive wildfire—urban wildfire—in the history of the country, probably a time for all of us, together, to say what could we be doing differently. And I am excited that Tim Sheehy is a new Senator. He is the first that I know of who has actually worked as a professional firefighter on wildfire. I know that he and others are willing to work across the aisle to come up with solutions.

Senator PADILLA. And Senator Sheehy and I are working on some proposals on a bipartisan basis to improve the Federal Government's ability to help in situations like these.

Mr. BURGUM. And if I could, Senator, I would say we would also have to look at, it goes back to actually the grid because if you—a wildfire, whether it's in North Dakota or California, you need three things: you need oxygen, you need fuel load, and you need a

spark. And in both cases, in North Dakota and in whatever, when you have high winds, those sparks can come from above-ground power lines coming in contact with vegetation. And so, we have to think about the grid—

Senator PADILLA. I love that you have that appreciation and knowledge, and unfortunately, the experience, because red flag conditions is something new to people across the country, but nothing new for those of us in the very dry West.

My time is running quickly. I want to get at least one other issue in on the record. Last session, I began another bipartisan effort, with Senator Daines, to primarily protect the pay increases for federal firefighters that Congress had previously approved. Side note, there are currently about a thousand brave federal firefighters that are part of the tremendous response. It's not just locals. It's not just state firefighters, but through mutual aid, a number of jurisdictions there, including federal firefighters. If confirmed, are you committed to supporting wildland firefighters? Because recruitment and retention challenges exist for a number of reasons, but compensation has certainly been one of them.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, it's a dangerous and very hard job. But it's an essential job. And I know, again, from my own recent experience, this was just October—the first week of October, we lost two lives in North Dakota as part of these raging wildfires that were tearing across the prairie. I had a chance immediately after that to meet with local volunteers and local firefighter units and our small state fire-front team. Our national guard was out, including a lot of citizens that jumped in as they did in California to try to save their own homes. I think we all have got a greater appreciation for that role. I think we need to have a better, more sophisticated response than we have right now because, again, this is a thing we need to recognize that there is rural firefighting and then there is urban. And I think the LA example shows us that there are things that we have to do differently going forward.

Senator PADILLA. Thank you.

And just in closing, I will follow up on a number of issues with questions for the record, unless we do get a second round. But a note, not a question—and a nod to Senator Hickenlooper, who allowed me to jump the line here—we are working on engagement on the Colorado River, some important negotiations that need to stay consensus-driven in the years ahead, and a recognition, again, tapping your experience as Governor, that we need federal and state agencies working collaboratively to tackle resource issues, especially water. In California, we have both the Central Valley Project, which is a federal system, and the State Water Project, which is the state system, that are truly interconnected. And so, I introduce that to you and look forward to working with you on the water management challenges that we will have to address together going forward, particularly given the federal biological opinions that have been carefully crafted and need to be maintained.

Thank you for your time.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cassidy.

Senator CASSIDY. Hey, Governor Burgum, thanks for doing the job, man, we appreciate it. We both come from oil and gas producing states. One of my top priorities has been to use federal/state

revenue sharing on oil and gas lands to help rebuild Louisiana's coastline. During the time of this hearing, we will have lost several football fields worth of Louisiana coastline, which, of course, makes us more vulnerable to a hurricane hitting our coast. And last Congress, I am pleased to say, the RISEE Act, which did that, passed by voice vote out of this Committee. So I am hoping we do that again.

Can you briefly speak to the importance of revenue sharing to North Dakota, knowing that on federal lands in North Dakota, there is revenue that comes back to help mitigate whatever negative impact that drilling may have?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, yes, absolutely. And the federal revenue goes two ways. I mean, at least we have got it coming back, a portion of it, back to the state. But then a portion of it goes back to the Federal Treasury, and the Federal Treasury, as we know, we have talked earlier about the debt that we have. Responsible, sustainable, smart development, whether it's onshore or offshore, is of great benefit to conservation—in your case, a coastline. But it also can help pay for other things. In our state, the revenues that are coming in are helping pay for education, healthcare, roads. It touches everything—

Senator CASSIDY. If you will, it's kind of a middle class, if you will, and lower economic class benefit program because those things are touching services directly, aside from the jobs being created, directly impacting the quality of their life.

Mr. BURGUM. Absolutely, and then when done effectively and appropriately, it also lowers the burden of sales tax and property tax and income tax on those same working individuals.

Senator CASSIDY. It's music to my ears. I will say when I speak to the folks that actually do these big developments, one fellow said, you know, it used to be when they had a lease sale, I could plan a fishing trip with my son at the same time because it was so regular. It was going to be on this day, at this time, happened to be in New Orleans, so they had a great meal. So I wanted to say that now there have been dilatory practices that have been instituted, not for the sake of anything other than being dilatory and to increase the cost of development to hopefully thwart that development. Can I get a commitment from you, as much as you can possibly do it, that when we have lease sales now, they will be as they are scheduled to have lease sales and so that people making these decisions will have certainty as to them?

Mr. BURGUM. As someone who is participating in a lawsuit suing the Federal Government to try to get them to hold the lease sales when they were supposed to be held by law, you can count that. As head of Interior, we will be following the law when it comes to lease sale time.

Senator CASSIDY. I think the operative statement is you will be following the law, and that is a good thing.

Mr. BURGUM. Yes.

Senator CASSIDY. Now, on that, we know that on some federal lands from before modern environmental standards, there are abandoned oil and gas wells, and those tend to leak methane, for example. I am very interested in working on a bipartisan basis, bicameral basis, of how we can actually have a federal program

which sustainably is paying to cap these abandoned oil and gas wells. And Louisiana has about 1,500 of them. Any thoughts about that, because I am sure in North Dakota that you had to address this issue too.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, in North Dakota, we took part of the revenues that were coming into the state from the oil and gas tax revenues and we created an Abandoned Well Reclamation Fund. And that has been replenished, and then that goes back in to do that. But we have also made sure that the private sector is doing their share.

Senator CASSIDY. Now, let me ask, because one thing I hear from the private sector is the issue of liability protection. Will they be sued the bejesus out of if something goes bad about this remediation of the abandoned oil and gas well? And I ask because I don't know the answer to it, we are trying to explore that. There are the abandoned mine provisions that we are looking at. How did you all manage that in North Dakota?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, we always were looking for incentives to make sure that the private sector was willing to participate as opposed to being afraid to participate. And you are describing this thing where if you get unlimited liability, then they want to run the other way and lawyer up and do that as opposed to, hey, if you got the appropriate bond levels that are economic, they pay those upfront, we exhaust those. If they have got other payments that they need to do, we have just been able to work collaboratively in a way to make sure the private sector is doing their share when we are doing this. And part of their share is because we are taking—if they were not investing in creating the well, putting in the people, doing the development, taking the risk on the front end, we wouldn't have the revenue to split up on the back end.

Senator CASSIDY. So we are going to look at what you all did in North Dakota as we draft our legislation.

One more thing, knowing that you will be in charge of this, as I gather, this kind of “how do we do energy” sort of thing. One thing that I have been concerned about is that countries like China do not enforce international standards on controlling pollution. That lowers their cost of manufacturing as much as 20 percent, incentivizing manufacturers to leave our country and move there. But then we get the loss of the jobs, but also all the air pollution that then blows over to our West Coast. I think I read 20 percent of the SO_x in California is related to emissions from China.

Now, one thing I have been proposing—Senator Graham is my co-sponsor—is a foreign pollution fee that would put a fee on certain products from a country like China roughly equal to their avoided cost of not complying with environmental regulations. Now, as the President speaks about tariffs, this would be a tariff that would be thoroughly defensible as we address something the economists call externalities. I slept in a Holiday Inn last night, I know that word.

[Laughter.]

Senator CASSIDY. So I go through that knowing that you, in your position, will be making sure that our industry is competitive in terms of controlling our emissions in accordance with the law, which then gives us that advantage relative to those competitors

arbitraging those rules. Any quick comment on that, because the Chair is being generous in allowing me a little extra time?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, I think you are spot-on to recognize President Trump, who has a willingness to use tariffs. His principle is reciprocity. If you have access to our markets, and we don't have access to yours, or if you are using unfair practices, if you are dumping in here, in this case, if they are not doing reclamation, they are using child labor, they are doing all the things that lower their cost, that is exactly the kind of place that he has publicly spoken about that he would want to have reciprocity with tariffs.

Senator CASSIDY. Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Hickenlooper.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Governor, for being here, I appreciate this. It's always good to have other governors in the room—or former governors, I guess.

At this point, I have got three questions, so I am going to be pretty quick in the questions, and I might—I try to be unfailingly polite, but if I override you, it's just because I want to get to all three questions.

Obviously, I worked on methane regulations back when I was Governor. We were the first state or province anywhere in the world to actually regulate methane, but we did it by working with the industry. They came and helped create the regulations that were going to guide them. Senator Cassidy was just talking about abandoned wells. It's all part of that same problem. As Secretary of the Interior, how do you think you can use your authority to advance rules that boost innovation in the energy sector to, you know—let's reduce methane is one thing, but I will broaden the question, say, and getting to better, cleaner energy that is at the same time reliable and low-cost?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, I should say, Mayor/Governor/Senator, I love this question because of the focus on innovation. We have seen in North Dakota, again, the federal regulation comes in, it's proposed. It goes through the rule changing. It takes years to finally get it finalized, then it gets finalized, and then, all of a sudden, you got a federal employee in a white pickup with a clipboard, you know, driving around, that the taxpayers are paying for, trying to find out if we have got an emission here, emission there. Meanwhile, if that is six to eight years from the beginning of a problem to when the rule gets finalized and is actually enforced, we have gone through like four or five cycles of—

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Get to the innovation because—

Mr. BURGUM. We have gone through four of five cycles of Moore's Law, and then someone's got a solution to say we can do methane capture at the well. We can do it cheaply. We can do this. They implement it. They can capture it. They can turn it into electricity. They can, you know, do power generation for a data center onsite, on a well site. I mean, the amount of innovation that is occurring right now in the energy industry is unbelievable. And so, it's as exciting as anything in tech that's going on.

And so, that's why I say, "innovation over regulation." We could solve these problems cheaper, faster, and quicker than we can through expensive and outdated regulations.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Yeah, we have never needed more innovation in a short time then we need energy right now.

As the energies are, on the other side, there have been a lot of reports about tariffs on critical minerals and possibly on everything, from all different—I mean, a lot of people are saying a lot of different things. So in terms of imposing tariffs without having a clear strategy on how we are going to secure the supply chains for these critical minerals that are essential to our defense, to our aerospace industry—go down the list—what's your plan to collaborate with our allies to make sure that we can ensure a reliable supply chain on these critical minerals?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, I think the key there is allies, because we have to have a security network of people that are truly our allies, and we have to be able to buy and sell from each other around these critical minerals, but right now, we have been, over the last 20 years, I mean, we were, as a nation, one of the great mining economies in the world 20 years ago. It has become a dirty word. You can hardly find a kid in college that wants to go into geology or geologic—

Senator HICKENLOOPER. You are hurting me.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, you were there. You were—

Senator HICKENLOOPER. I am a geologist.

Mr. BURGUM. Yes, you are.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Well, I was.

Mr. BURGUM. But you understand, in your profession, how that has shifted in your lifetime, and we have to bring it back because this is critical to our nation's future. And again, when we can do it here with innovation, better, cleaner, and safer than anywhere else the world, we are actually helping the world environment—

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Exactly.

Mr. BURGUM [continuing]. When we do it in the United States.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. We can set those standards. And I agree completely that we are the ones who are going to create a better way to extract minerals with less pollution and less risk.

Last question: obviously, public lands are a key part of Colorado, just like they are of North Dakota. I commend you. I think what you did as Governor, you took a lot of what we did and did it better. It is very frustrating, but we governors like to give credit where credit is due. We have certain places in Colorado, and we discussed this when you were in my office last week, and I appreciate you taking the time with all that you have got going on to come and spend an hour with us. We have some places where local governments, the local community, the ranchers, have kind of joined arms side-by-side to protect lands. We have one piece of land there that is called the Thompson Divide. And it has been somewhat controversial. There is one mining or oil company that felt that there was potential there. I took a pretty deep look at the seismic, and couldn't see much source there, much potential, but it has been controversial.

I wanted to make sure to extend the invitation that you come to Colorado, which I am sure everyone up here, even if they haven't said it, they look forward to it, but to come walk that landscape with some of the local ranchers and farmers there so you can get a sense that this isn't a partisan issue, this is a piece of land that

pretty much everyone in the community has a side that needs to be protected.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, I appreciate the invitation. I would look forward to it, Senator.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Great, thank you.

I yield the floor.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Risch.

Senator RISCH. Governor, welcome. I can't tell you how glad I am to see another governor for this position, and particularly coming from west of the Mississippi. You know, if you look at this Committee, it's kind of the former governor's club. There are a lot of us on here and we have meetings from time to time. Hoeven takes up most of the time trying to convince us there is a "z" in bison, and we can't find it, so.

[Laughter.]

Senator RISCH. In any event, thank you for doing this, and because of the fact that most of our western states have so much federal land, it's really important we have somebody that understands those issues. So thank you for that and thank you for the job.

They have already had a discussion with you about grizzly bears. We don't want grizzly bears, they kill people. You know, the Federal Government already gave us wolves. We had them all killed off about 75 years ago and then some yahoo back here decided we needed them again and they brought them in and brought us 30 wolves and said when there were 203 breeding pairs, we could delist them. Well, by the time I became Governor, there were at least 1,500 wolves. Nobody knows how many breeding pairs, and we couldn't get them delisted until I got back here and we finally were able to put together a coalition and got them delisted. Grizzly bears are so far over the top because they kill people. They really do kill people. And they just don't mesh with society. So in any event, we will look forward to working with you on those issues.

Probably one of the most important decisions you are going to make here in the immediate future is—I know how the transition team is working, and you and the transition team are going to have to pick a BLM Director. And that is really important to us because all of us that are western states have a tremendous amount of BLM land. We had a real problem with this one. Fortunately, she has only got about 95 hours left. She was an eco-terrorist. She engaged in the work that was done in Idaho of spiking trees. You probably know about spiking trees. Since she has been BLM Director, we haven't seen her. She has been up here, I think, once in the four years. And it divided this Committee deeply. We had a huge fight over it. It was a straight party-line vote. She got confirmed. We don't want somebody like that running the BLM, particularly somebody we can't find. So I urge you to use your best decision-making ability when you choose that person.

On another important issue, the issue for us in Idaho right now is the Lava Ridge Wind Project. And my good friend Senator King and I have different views on windmills, and bless you for taking the windmills. You can have them all. We don't want them in Idaho. We hate windmills in Idaho. They are a tremendous blight on our viewscape. We really don't like them. And the Green New Deal that this Administration has put together is trying to saddle

us with 100,000 acres—100,000 acres—with 241 windmills on them that are a little higher than the Space Needle. I appreciate you meeting with me and listening to how wrong this project is on so many different levels. The good news is, and you don't know this yet, I don't think, but that project has only got about 95 hours left to be on the table. That's going to go by the by, and believe me, in Idaho, this is a 99 to 1 percent issue. And we are going to be so glad to see it gone. And it will be gone and you are not going to have to worry about it anymore after that.

Let me just close with this. I am so glad to hear that the President is going to put you in the position he is on energy. That's incredible. We need it. We all know his vision for making America independent and actually being an exporter and tapping our wealth. One word we haven't used here in that regard is nuclear. Idaho is the birthplace of nuclear energy in the universe. We have still got the first lightbulbs we lit in 1951 by generating nuclear energy. We built about 52 reactors out there at the site. I don't know if you have been to the Idaho National Lab or not, but if you are going to be in the energy business, you really need to. There's a tremendous, tremendous resurgence of interest in nuclear. You know, the thing kind of went by the way after we had the unfortunate Three Mile Island incident, but the renaissance in nuclear, not just in America, but around the world, is staggering.

Coming off the drawing boards at INL and in the very near future are SMRs—small modular-reactors. It is going to be followed by the micro-reactors. That is going to change the world as far as energy is concerned. And I am glad to hear you talk about baseload because when you are talking about nuclear, you are talking about baseload. And I suspect the world, as we go through this century, is going to rely heavily on nuclear. There is tremendous—and the other hat I wear is Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. I deal with countries, particularly the Eastern European countries—they are entering contracts and it is a national security issue because we compete with China, with Russia, and to a degree, France, when these new projects are coming on board.

So thank you for what you are doing. God bless you. We welcome you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Gallego.

Senator GALLEGGO. Thank you. And Governor, thanks again for joining me, and thank you for sitting down in my office, and I appreciate our time together. We kind of hit upon this, but one of the biggest Interior-related issues is going to be the Colorado River. Arizona is at the heart of our national defense when it comes to chip making, agriculture, and food security, and of course, home to the fifth largest and best city in the country. In addition, 22 of the 30 Colorado River Basin tribes are in Arizona. So rules governing the reductions of Colorado River water expire at the end of 2026. And post-2026 operation conversations are still ongoing. The Lower Basin states have put forward a proposal for management of the Colorado River that shares the risk among all states. However, no agreement has been reached, leading to potential conflicts within the Basin, which, of course, we would all like to avoid.

Would you work with Arizona parties and my office so that any determination post-2026 isn't overly burdensome to any one state and is consistent with the Colorado River Compact?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, Senator, you bring up a really important issue, and this is with the 2026 date looming, coming forward, and of course, as you know, Interior does have some specific authorities relative to helping with the Lower and Upper Basins. I would say, as a former Chair of the Western Governors' Association, I know that this has been a battle that has gone on as long as there have been people in the West, people fighting over water in the West. My experience in North Dakota has been more on the Missouri River Basin, but also, we have been in some deep battles with Canada because we have two rivers that are in North Dakota that actually flow north into Canada—the Souris River and the Red River in the North.

So whether it's international or the complexities of the Missouri, I have some good understanding and good exposure to this. But I think you can count on it that we are going to look for a collaborative solution that serves everyone. Also, we have to look for innovation on ways on the conservation side, because we can't make more water, but if we could use what we have wisely, that is going to look for the best solutions for all. But I appreciate that you are engaged in this. I know how important it is to Arizona and its economy.

Senator GALLEGUO. Thanks, Governor.

In our meeting we also discussed a lot about our tribal communities and tribal nations. I am very glad that you have a good background and understanding and relationships with them. And we talked a lot about tribal law enforcement, including some of the bills that I have put forward to increase tribal law enforcement. But unfortunately, we see just high rates of missing and murdered women, as well as other violent crimes, a lot of this really due to lack of tribal law enforcement and communications with our agencies that are supposed to have oversight and collaboration. So, you know, I have worked through my time in Congress to try to increase the funding for tribal law enforcement, but our federal budget cuts really put all of that work at risk. So can you tell me, what is your plan to work collaboratively with Congress and tribes across the country on tribal law enforcement and proven efforts, and how do you plan to ensure that we can do this in a bipartisan manner?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, I think there is nothing partisan about enforcing the law and protecting the citizens of the United States. And one of the great tragedies in our country is the lack of law enforcement on tribal lands and the fact that we have organized crime that is, you know, preying on those gaps. They are aware that the gaps are there, and whether it's training centers—Senator Hoeven has been particularly supportive, along with Senator Cramer—we don't have enough training centers across the nation for the northern tribes or the southern tribes. So we need more recruiting. We need more staffing. We need lots of other things that are going on.

But you mentioned, the first time it has come up, but the missing and murdered indigenous women. I mean, this is, again, an un-

seen tragedy in America. I think the FBI list is now at over 6,000 unsolved cases. And I, you know, believe, again, that we just—it is a complete tragedy. It seems if we, you know, we lose a college student at spring break, it's a Netflix series and the whole nation knows her name personally. And then we have these same individual tragedies that happen over and over again in Indian Country, and people aren't even aware that is it's going on. So we have got to change our entire approach to this.

Senator GALLEG. Thank you again for that, and I look forward to working with you on that, and I had a lot of sense of history on the House side on this.

In the last four years, we have learned from Reclamation that Glen Canyon Dam has some design flaws that limit its ability to pass water at lower elevations, which means we have to fix that dam, and pretty soon. We need the ability to essentially pass water around the dam if we actually obviously cannot go through it, especially if the hydrology in the region gets worse. How would you make fixing the dam that delivers water to the Grand Canyon and the three million people downstream from that in the Lower Basin, and of course Mexico as part of our treaty obligations, a priority?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, Senator, I appreciate your bringing that to my attention. This is one issue I was not aware of about—the Glen Canyon Dam deficiencies, but obviously, with the Bureau of Reclamation being the second largest operator of hydroelectric dams in the country behind the Army Corps of Engineers, I will quickly be meeting with the team, if I have the privilege of being confirmed for this position, about this issue because we have to have working facilities on these critical rivers.

And as we know, we have to have more reservoir capability because part of the issue we are facing is that perhaps we not only need to fix—we have to upgrade some of these so that we can have more storage.

Senator GALLEG. Yeah, I would love to work on that, personally. Thank you. Thank you, Governor. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Hyde-Smith.

Senator HYDE-SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I think you guys will be very happy that I am probably the last one. This will soon be over. But I just certainly appreciate your willingness and your eagerness. I enjoyed the visit we had in my office and the sincerity that you have, but most of all, your capabilities. You are so capable for this position. And I am very thankful to you and your family that you are willing to do this.

I am going to be brief, but one of the things we talked about in my office was a local Mississippi thing. William Faulkner once said, "To understand the rest of the world, you first must understand a place like Mississippi." But we are very blessed with the National Park Service, that we have several sites in Mississippi that certainly contribute to our tourism, the economy of our state, and we work with them very closely with public-private partnerships. And in Vicksburg, now, we are working on a visitor center with the State of Mississippi, public-private partnerships, and Friends of Vicksburg National Military Park. So we certainly want to make sure that continues. In Natchez, the state is enhancing two state

historical sites to better complement the Natchez National Historic Park sites.

So, of course, I would want to invite you to visit those and am asking for your willingness to commit to me on working on these two particular projects in Vicksburg and Natchez.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, Senator, thank you, and first of all, I just want to thank you too for your capabilities. It's great to have a Senator who grew up in agriculture and also was Ag Commissioner. That is fantastic. I spent most of my life—my family was always involved in agriculture my entire life, and many of my cousins still are. So it's such an important part of our national security as well.

But in terms of the national park thing, as we said earlier, we have a big deferred maintenance issue and we have a big opportunity. These are the precious spots out of the billions of acres of surface, subsurface, and offshore that we own. The national parks, for Americans, are a priority, and we need to take care of these sites, whether historic or others. And again, we have to make sure that they are capable of handling and supporting the visitors that want to see them. We know they are great for the local economy. So I appreciate the invitation and look forward to working with you.

Senator HYDE-SMITH. Thank you on that.

Now, I am going to go to South Mississippi—our offshore oil and gas production in the Gulf of Mexico. Of course, it plays a vital role in the Gulf States' economies as well. We call it our blue economy down there. The anchor platform has recently come online with the Gulf of Mexico, but it will produce 75,000 barrels of oil per day, and this oil is refined in Pascagoula, Mississippi, and obviously, the jobs that it provides there and the benefits that we have. But it is important that the Department maintain a steady leasing schedule to ensure companies can continue the opportunities there for exploration for new production to support the affordable, reliable energy. So the current National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Plan for the five-year plan includes only three possible lease sales, a historic low. Do you believe the current five-year plan is adequate to continue to meet the energy needs of the nation? And if not, will it be a priority for Interior to develop or finalize a new five-year plan?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, Senator, I think that you know the long lead times it takes for the private sector to make the significant investments to do safe, secure, and smart, sophisticated offshore development. It is a really important part of our nation's economy and our national security. The fact that during the current Administration, the lease sales have been so unpredictable and disruptive, and the fact that they are projecting forward to have among the fewest we have ever had, almost would guarantee that we would see a decline in energy production in offshore in the years ahead because of the lead times. And knowing that we are in a national security battle, and the way that we win, the way that we ensure America's future is that we have energy dominance. This isn't opposed to the President's direction, I mean, to have, I mean, the President would be saying we have to be doing more smart development, not less. And as I stated earlier with one of the questions, in North Dakota we

literally were suing the Federal Government because they were not holding the lawfully required lease sales. So getting lease sales to be regular, predictable, and at a level that allows us to maintain energy production in our country is a minimum standard for us.

Senator HYDE-SMITH. Thank you for those answers, and I cannot tell you how glad we are to have you. Thank you.

Mr. BURGUM. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Wyden.

Senator WYDEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and let me say, I very much look forward to working with you and Senator Heinrich. We have always worked on these issues in a bipartisan way, and I look forward to doing it again.

Mr. Burgum, I think you know from our visit in the office how strongly I feel about these clean energy tax credits. I wrote this package, \$400 billion or so, the biggest investment in fighting climate change in American history. It uses carrots, not sticks. The more you reduce carbon, the bigger your tax savings. It's private-sector driven, and in what I consider to be a huge breakthrough, we reward technological neutrality. The reason that is so important, as you and I talked about, is nobody knows what the big carbon reducers are going to be 30 years from now. And so, the reason I insisted on that provision is, it creates what I call an innovation lane. It's an opportunity to send a message to people about every possible type of energy use, that you are going to have a chance, if you innovate, to be part of a very bright future.

Now, I heard something, and I am just counting on you to deny it, that maybe you were not as interested in this as I thought you were in the office. So, you seemed kind of skeptical on some of the earlier discussion, and I just hope, because you are going to be very influential in the whole Administration on energy, that we can work together on this. I believe we will work together on a variety of other issues as well. Your thoughts?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, Senator, I really enjoyed our discussion and the extra time we spent together, and as I said then, and restate now, that I think your principles are really sound about being, you know, technology neutral, about having carrots versus sticks, and also about having, you know, private sector versus just all government—

Senator WYDEN. I ought to quit while I am ahead.

Mr. BURGUM. Yeah, well, that was all good, I mean, it's all good stuff. I think if—I don't know specifically other comments you may have heard—but I believe that these things may have been so successful as it relates to the electrical grid, that there is now a significant imbalance in the amount of projects that are intermittent and not persistent, and we need to make sure for our country to be successful in the near term that we get back to making sure that we have the appropriate amount of baseload to manage both of those things, because if the sun is not shining, the wind is not blowing, and we don't have baseload, then we have brownouts and blackouts and we have higher electric prices for every American. So it's the balance of trying to achieve that.

And then, the other point that I may have said today, which I would stand by, is that it's great that people thought hey, let's put massive incentives around EVs, around electric vehicles against

fueled cars that have liquid fuels, but in America, if there is innovation neutrality, in North Dakota we are producing a carbon-negative barrel of oil. We are producing carbon-neutral biofuels. I mean, America built 200,000 gas stations without a dime of public money or taxpayer incentives because the market created that, and we have an opportunity to have innovation and an innovation lane around decarbonizing liquid fuels. So, we just have to make sure we have the balance, because we need it all. We need it all to win the competition we are going to win.

Senator WYDEN. Well, first of all, on the electric front, I am very much of your view there. I mean, we have had big challenges in our part of the world. There's a transmission issue. The two pieces that are really left out are how to deal with electric and how to promote transmission. I am very interested in working with you. I am going to take—as I run back to the Finance Committee, where we are talking about these issues—the view that you are open to continue working in this space rather than coming on in and just saying we are going to chuck it in the trash can, because I am always interested in improving on something. I mean, the founding fathers said that a new Congress is never bound by absolutely everything from a past Congress.

So I am interested in improving it, but I am going to take out of our discussion that you are open to working with me and others in a bipartisan way. At one point, this was a purely bipartisan kind of effort. We can talk about what happened, because I thought it was a question of who was going to get the credit, but I am going to take out of here that you will work with me.

Mr. BURGUM. Yes, you can count on it that I will, and you can also count on it that I am going to be anchored in two things—one is national security, so we shouldn't have incentives that enslave us to getting all of our critical minerals from a major power competitor, like China. And then the other thing you can count on is that I am going to be focused on the economy and affordability because if we can do something for \$60 a ton versus \$900 a ton, I am going to choose the \$60 a ton of avoided CO₂.

Senator WYDEN. My time is out, but I am going to say the idea of linking a lower carbon future with lower prices and to focus on national security is a kind of triangle with three sides that I can support, and I would like to work with you on it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. BURGUM. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Barrasso.

Senator BARRASSO. Thanks so much, Mr. Chairman. Governor, congratulations, great to be with you again. Thanks for our time together.

As you know, the Federal Government controls hundreds of millions of acres of land in the West. I mean, I can look at this Committee, in our home states, and the well-being, certainly in my home State of Wyoming, depends on strong leadership at the Department of the Interior. The Department must work with states and local communities to manage our resources in a way that works for the people that actually live on the land. And over the last four years, that has been a big problem, as we have seen an Administration that seems to just be punishing the West. The will

of the people who depend on the land, live on the land, take care of the land, was ignored the last four years. So Governor, there is a long list of things that I believe must be fixed, and I am going to ask for your help.

Number one, in Rock Springs, Wyoming, the RMP—that stands for the Resource Management Plan. As you and I know, and those who are watching will know about now, the Bureau of Land Management finalized that just last month—December 2024. They did it not even a week after the Governor of Wyoming submitted his appeal to the proposed plan, but they rushed out the door with this. This final plan is going to devastate the people of Southwest Wyoming. It's going to lock up millions of acres of land that local communities and the entire state rely upon. The Governor, our state legislature, the county commissioners, and the local communities all strongly oppose what the Federal Government is slamming down our throat. So will you commit to work with my office and the state to undo this disastrous plan?

Mr. BURGUM. Senator, I am familiar, having been Governor until December 15th, because we had a similar experience in North Dakota of having plans like this pushed on the State of North Dakota. So yes, absolutely, you can count on me working with you.

Senator BARRASSO. Great.

In Wyoming, about two-thirds of our minerals under the land are owned by the Federal Government—about half the surface land and two-thirds of the minerals under the land. That means that energy development in my state depends on cooperation from the Department of the Interior. Wyoming's legislative leaders would benefit from meeting with you directly as they plan the state's energy future, and they ask you to commit to joining our Wyoming delegation, as well as the Wyoming stakeholders to talk about the future.

Mr. BURGUM. I would enjoy that very much, and I have enjoyed the relationship I had with Governor Matt Mead and now Governor Mark Gordon, and we have been on regular communication because there have been a lot of shared challenges between Wyoming and North Dakota.

Senator BARRASSO. And both the current Governor and former Governor speak of you with great appreciation, great admiration, and great respect. So I look forward to that.

Buffalo, Wyoming—last year, the outgoing Administration finalized a resource management plan for Buffalo—the Buffalo, Wyoming field office. This plan would ban new coal leasing in the Powder River Basin, which is the most energy-rich area in the country. We are America's energy breadbasket in Wyoming. This short-sighted decision is an insult to our communities and harmful for American energy security. If confirmed, would you work with me to reverse this plan?

Mr. BURGUM. Absolutely, and I also know that when you talk about critical minerals, that Powder River coal includes many of the critical minerals that we need for defense, for technology, and for the future of this country. And so, rather than, you know, this blanket approach of trying to block that type of energy development, we need to be thinking about how innovation can help us solve multiple problems at once.

Senator BARRASSO. I am going to move now to oil and gas leases. The outgoing Administration has a disgraceful record on oil and gas management. It blocked and locked our production at just about every turn. It hasn't issued leases for a lease sale held over four years ago. They still haven't issued the leases, and it deferred over 600,000 acres from leasing in Wyoming that were previously cleared for oil and gas production. If confirmed, will you work to quickly issue those leases and offer additional acres for leasing?

Mr. BURGUM. Absolutely, and Senator, as I have stated before, North Dakota has faced the same—what I view as absolutely that there is a case in federal court which I am positive the ruling is going to be that the current Administration—the Biden Administration—did not follow the law relative to holding required lease sales.

Senator BARRASSO. The next area is sage grouse. Wyoming is the home to a large population of greater sage grouse and its habitat. For over 15 years, Wyoming has been at the forefront of adopting new management approaches to protect the species. Our state has led successful efforts to balance conservation with economic development. Again, the Biden Administration proposed to designate over 600,000 acres in Wyoming as "Areas of Critical Environmental Concern." That is going to lock up thousands of acres in Wyoming, halting production and development across the state. Would you be willing to reopen the Department's greater sage grouse management?

Mr. BURGUM. I have been advised that the rule of decision came out this morning. I don't want to put myself into making a forward statement that I would have to recuse, but I would just say, for my time as Chairman of Western Governors, I am familiar with the use of designations to try to restrict energy development, even when you might have a species like the sage grouse that is neither on the Endangered or the Threatened list.

Senator BARRASSO. I will ask one final question, and you have done quite a bit on the grizzly bear already, so let me talk about federal grazing. The Department of the Interior is critical in its role for management of federal lands across the West. Almost half of the land in Wyoming is owned by the Federal Government. Land managed under multiple use is required by law to be managed without impairment of the productivity of the land. These are public places that people from Wyoming depend on accessing for their livelihoods, agriculture, all the ranching activities, recreation, mineral development. Congress directed grazing, timber harvesting, recreation, and energy and mineral production to take place on federal lands. Will you support the multiple-use mandate the law mandates for federal land?

Mr. BURGUM. Absolutely, I do, Senator. And since we talked about wildfires today, grazing reduces fuel load. Timber management appropriately reduces fuel load. Surface development can create roads paid for by the private sector that support our fire-fighters. All of the multiple use is a component of a comprehensive re-thinking of how we think about fire management on federal lands.

Senator BARRASSO. Yes, thank you, Governor.
Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Cotton.

Senator COTTON. Governor, welcome and congratulations. We reached the regrettable point that we often do in the Senate where almost everything has been said, but not everyone has said it. I will refrain from saying a lot of what has gone before me, but I will say, for the record, that I want to associate myself with the comments of my Republican colleagues about the need for significantly increasing energy production while also being responsible stewards of our public lands and waters.

There is, however, one issue I don't think has been discussed yet under the Endangered Species Act. And I think it's a scandal of the first order. I am surprised it has not gotten more attention as of late. On January 3, the New York Times published a story about the so-called snail darter. It was a species that was designated as endangered by Fish and Wildlife back in the 1970s. The entire thrust of the story is that a zoologist basically made up this species of snail darter all for the point of halting construction of the Tellico Dam on the Little Tennessee River. After many years of delay, it finally took an act of Congress to build that dam. An academic cited in that article said this is a not uncommon practice, creating new species, when there is really no difference between other extant, non-endangered species for what he called the "downstream conservation implications," which is to say, activists creating species and calling them endangered to stop the construction of a dam or a power generation plant or a housing development.

And again, this is something that was admitted publicly in the New York Times by some of these activists. That is why I say I think this is a scandal of the first order. Can I get your commitment, in light of these admissions, to go back and reexamine Endangered Species Act listings and identify any other potential false designations?

Mr. BURGUM. Senator Cotton, you raise a very important issue, which is the weaponization of federal rules, you know, meant to actually protect wildlife, but to do it in a way where it's being used, not to protect wildlife, but it's being used to stop legal activities, like the multiple-use scenario we were just talking about with Senator Barrasso. Again, it's just a legal weapon, and it's used for fundraising. It is used for groups that are just trying to block our nation's progress. And so, I agree with you completely. And you mentioned the New York Times. If that article was someplace else, you know, but the fact that the New York Times wrote that article, I found also to be a remarkable admission of at least one case where there was abuse of the Endangered Species Act relative to its intended use. So yes, you can count, absolutely—

Senator COTTON. Thank you. I appreciate that because also I think, not in light just of this public admission, but also the West Virginia case and the Loper Bright case, there can be legal infirmity in a lot of our federal bureaucracy's past decisions. So I appreciate your willingness to take a look at that once you are on the job.

Thank you very much.

The CHAIRMAN. That concludes round one. We are going to do a quick round two with some follow-ups that a few members have asked.

I want to talk to you briefly about the fact that public lands represent a massive public asset, and yet an accurate valuation is something that we don't have, and that undermines informed decision-making about their use and their management. What steps would you take, if confirmed as Secretary, to improve the transparency in this area and ensure federal land valuations reflect their value to the American people?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, I would just say, this idea that I will call America's balance sheet is something that the Trump Administration has quite a bit of enthusiasm for in discussions with the Treasury nominee, Scott Bessent, Commerce nominee, Howard Lutnick, and even Speaker Mike Johnson called me a few weeks ago and said hey, what's this American balance sheet idea? I mean, I think for our standing in the world for us to, you know, talk non-stop about what our liabilities are, we should also be fluent, just as any business would be, to be able to talk about what our assets are, and the assets of this country, I think, outpace anyplace in the world because of the care that we have given, in particular, to the public lands—the surface, the subsurface, and the offshore. And we have proven time and time again that we can do it better, cleaner, and safer than anyone else here.

If I am a timber company, and I own timber land, and it has not been harvested, I put that on my balance sheet. If I have timber land and I have planted young trees, I put it on my balance sheet at a different valuation. When we protect U.S. lands and then don't cut a tree and then they burn down, we not only produce enormous amounts of emissions and enormous amounts of carbon, but we also effectively wasted the public's asset. And I think it's part of our duty in the role, if I have the privilege of being nominated here, but all of us as elected officials, to make sure that we are getting a return on the nation's balance sheet for the benefit and the use of the American people.

The CHAIRMAN. Great.

Mr. BURGUM. So understanding that number, I think, is key. I would just say one last thing—people say, oh, it's going to be really hard. It's really hard to develop it. We did this in North Dakota. When I took office, they said well, we have no way of knowing what our undeveloped minerals are, and we found a young software company that was able to figure out precisely what the future value of every one of the wells in North Dakota on public land would be worth. It has been used for estate planning. If grandma dies and she has only got 10 percent of one well, they can figure out the value for that. If we can do that there, we can figure it out for the whole country.

And just as I said to Speaker Johnson, we are required, as a nation, to conduct a census within every ten years—not every ten years, but within ten years, do a census. That is hard work but we figure out a way to do it. I would think if Congress stood up and said, hey, every agency, every bureau, every department of the U.S. Government needs to figure out what their asset value is, then we get after it and we come up with a number and then we can make these trade-offs. And when you take—when you do by executive order and take hundreds of millions of offshore subsurface out of leasing, and that is viewed as a costless event, at least we could

have the trade-off and say yes, some people thought it was important to take that off of the table, but what did it mean for the American people? Did we just take trillions of dollars of future revenue out of the pockets of our future generations?

And so, I think again, creating a financial understanding where we could have an honest discussion about some of these executive actions that are happening at the end of this term, for example, would be useful for all Americans to understand.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I appreciate that.

I have got another question that I was going to ask regarding PILT. In the interest of time, I am going to forgo that. I will just give a very brief statement.

PILT, Payment in Lieu of Taxes, the Federal Government came up with it. Congress came up with it about 50 years ago to help offset the burden states carry, states with a lot of public land because they do not receive any property tax revenue from it, so it's supposed to offset that. In some parts of the country where there is a lot of public land, this works out okay. In other parts, it's pennies on the dollar compared to what they would get if they could tax the land even at its lowest valuation, its lowest rate. So I would love to talk to you about PILT reforms and making PILT, generally, a priority because a lot of these communities rely on it for fire, search and rescue, schools, safety, and so forth.

Senator Heinrich.

Senator HEINRICH. Governor, Senator Daines mentioned a very specific challenge with the Endangered Species Act, but as a governor, you know that one of the best ways to head off those conflicts is to prevent species from ever being listed by recovering them through proactive, voluntary conservation at the state level. Senator Tillis and nine of his Republican colleagues and I have a highly bipartisan bill called the Recovering America's Wildlife Act that helps states do exactly that. And in fact, North Dakota's former game and fish director, Terry Steinwand, was one of the architects of that legislation. It has strong support from the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, from many of the conservation groups that you mentioned in your exchange with Senator Justice.

Does that sound like the kind of approach that you could work with Senator Tillis and I on?

Mr. BURGUM. Absolutely, Senator Heinrich. I think, again, a super-sound principle there, which is to do the work to keep it off of any kind of federal designation, working collaboratively with the states. I had the pleasure of working with our game and fish commissioner, Terry Steinwand, for six of my eight years as Governor.

Senator HEINRICH. Right.

Mr. BURGUM. He had almost a 40-year career in wildlife management. It's people like that that I know and respect across all the states. I know you have got them in New Mexico. I know we have them in Utah. I mean, the people that work in game and fish at the state level that are working on these things, I just, I haven't met somebody from the federal level that flies into North Dakota that cares more about the soil, the air, the water, the fish, the wildlife, than the people that we have at the state level. And we should just—this sounds like you are entrusting this back to the states, and that is where it belongs.

Senator HEINRICH. And it was really an idea that grew out of asking all of those agencies, like, what's the right way to approach this? And they said, well instead of, you know, just having an emergency room, which is what the Endangered Species Act effectively is, let's try to give wildlife primary care. Let's intervene when it's much cheaper and much more effective and you can really move the needle.

You and I talked a little bit about tribal water settlements. Those are incredibly important for water certainty in the West, especially with all the, you know, all the conflicts we have, not just in the Colorado Basin, but also in the Rio Grande Basin and other western basins. If you are confirmed, will you commit to continuing the Department's work to both resolve legal claims around tribal water settlements, but also just implement the existing water settlements that have already been made?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, you have my commitment to work on those important issues.

Senator HEINRICH. Great.

I am going to make one other quick statement. I know you heard from my friend and colleague from Idaho, and we have done some great work together on cleaning up abandoned mines. We don't necessarily agree on wind generation, but I would simply remind you that onshore wind is in that basket of multiple use. And so, you can always hold it to the same standard as oil and gas, but you can't legally, at least, unilaterally deny legally permitted wind generation. So with that, thank you for all of your answers today.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator King.

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

First, I want to associate myself with your comments, Mr. Chairman, on determining the asset value of what we own. It's astounding that that doesn't exist. And one of the things that would contribute to, as we discussed previously, is adequate maintenance budgets. If you know the asset value, there are, sort of, standard industry percentages that should be applied in order to determine a maintenance budget. So I believe that's an important step.

I presume you believe climate change is a problem, is that correct?

Mr. BURGUM. Yes, I believe that climate change is a global phenomenon, for sure.

Senator KING. And I noted the biographical material that in 2021, as Governor, you set a goal for North Dakota of carbon neutrality by 2030, to be achieved in a variety of ways. And as you mentioned, you have really worked hard on the carbon neutrality of fossil fuel extraction and fossil fuel use. I am a little worried today, though. You keep distinguishing between intermittent and baseload. Would you agree that renewable resources, solar and wind, for example, can be developed if they are adequately—if they can be integrated into the grid in a safe and reliable way?

Mr. BURGUM. Yes, they can, and it's not for me, personally, for any political reasons that I distinguish, it's just because of physics—the physics of the grid. If we don't have enough baseload, and it's the baseload that we have that has allowed our nation to make the investments into the intermittent—

Senator KING. I just, I don't want the word—in a former life I developed both baseload and intermittent resources—I don't want the word baseload to be code for no renewables. That's not what you are saying, is it?

Mr. BURGUM. No. We need a balance, but they cannot—the intermittent, if you want to call them renewables, is used as a positive word, but this is a fact of life, is that they are intermittent. And when they are intermittent, until we have storage solutions, and we are years away from having significant enough cost-effective storage to support that, we need to have the baseload or the intermittent doesn't even have a life.

Senator KING. But it can be integrated. In your case, in North Dakota, 35 percent of your electricity comes from wind power. I presume your grid works?

Mr. BURGUM. Well, it's super-stressed, as it is around the country. We are in parts of two grids. We are part of MISO going east and we are part of SPP going west. And you can have days when the rated capacity is 30, but you got a day when the wind is blowing, the wind is blowing so hard, it drives all the baseload off of production. And then the next day, it's 20 below and there is no wind blowing and we have got no wind and then you got to, like, crank up the baseload again. And so, there is—

Senator KING. That's one of the most important reasons that—we have talked about innovation—we need to work on storage. You would agree, I think, that renewables or intermittents, whatever you want to call them, plus storage, equals baseload?

Mr. BURGUM. Yes, but right now, at a much higher cost. And so, then, of course, we want it to not only be reliable, we also want to have it be affordable. And so, that is part of what we have to look at as a nation is, what cost are we willing to take on to try to achieve those goals. And I believe if it's all-of-the-above, if we can decarbonize traditional fuels cheaper than we can subsidize some of the renewables, then that should be looked at fairly and equitably and economically, because that is a better path forward for every citizen, if we can do it more affordably.

Senator KING. I wouldn't disagree with that, but we have talked a lot about innovation, and I am a great believer in American innovation, and the cost, for example, of solar panels has gone from, I don't know, \$70 a kilowatt, down to 70 cents. I mean, battery storage—for example, in Maine there is a project underway for an 85-megawatt, 100-hour grid-scale storage at a reasonable cost because it's not based on lithium ion—it's based on iron. And so, we are moving into a period where innovation, I believe, will bring storage down. And of course, as you know, wind and solar are the cheapest forms of energy today on a leveled basis, understanding that storage and backup is part of that calculation. But I hope that you will work with the Department of Energy. Mr. Wright was here yesterday, and one of his business interests was in geothermal and batteries. So I just, when I hear baseload used sometimes in these contexts, it sounds like no more renewables. I don't think that's a sustainable path for this country, and it's certainly not a way of meeting the challenge of climate change, which you have acknowledged is a serious one.

Mr. BURGUM. No, it's—we need all forms of electricity and we need more of it in the very near term. And so, this is not about one versus the other, this is about how do we drive forward and increase the amount of electricity we have in the country. So I am a both—all of the above—in terms of our approach of how we do it, but we have got to do it in a way that we have affordability and reliability.

On the storage side, there is a future, but having been in tech for 30 years, batteries get better at about two percent a year, and that is what it has been for 30 or 40 years, and there is no breakthrough coming. Yes, it's improving, but it is not like the microchip, you know, which doubles the power—

Senator KING. It may not be Moore's Law, but I think the amount of resources that are going into this research at the Department of Energy and in other places, and the development of this iron-based, grid-scale storage, there are opportunities for significant baseloads. I like your answer where you said we need it all, and I appreciate having that on the record.

Mr. BURGUM. Yes.

Senator KING. Thank you very much, Governor, I appreciate your being with us.

Mr. BURGUM. Thank you. Thank you, Senator.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Hickenlooper.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. I ran down the hall to get here. I didn't want to miss my chance for a second question, second round of questions. And again, thank you for your service as a governor, all the way through your career. You have shown a real inclination, both through your government service and through your philanthropy to engage in the community and to go to the community. I think the letters from the tribes and what I have heard from our tribes in Colorado, that you are held in very, very high esteem, I think, across this country, and I think that is going to be a powerful thing.

I have one curious question. I think they are still doing it, where the Western Governors' Association, do they still meet with the Secretary of the Interior in December, or have they stopped doing that?

Mr. BURGUM. There has been a tradition to meet with the Secretary of Interior when they have their annual meeting in Washington, DC, which is usually in late January, early February. And I would look forward to having the opportunity for that invitation, if you know anybody there that could send me one.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Well, just, I knew that other governors were watching our discussion, so I wanted to make sure I got that on there.

Mr. BURGUM. I think your own Governor Polis might be the current chair, so maybe—

Senator KING. This governor thing is getting kind of thick, isn't it?

[Laughter.]

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Well, it's distilled down pretty much—just us left.

I want to talk a little bit about the Colorado River, and it's at least—it's a 25-year drought, a longer-term drought, and we are

able to go back—this is the geologist in me—but there are sediments throughout the Grand Canyon that can be correlated, and this appears to be the worst drought in 10,000 years. I mean, this is a serious drought, and you have 40 million people that depend on this, and we have been working aggressively with the Lower Basin states, and the Upper Basin states, and one of the things now is, even before you began running for the highest office, the work that you did around water in North Dakota, with roughly the largest investments in water infrastructure ever, but half of it was for making sure you have clean water and then half of it was to make sure you are protecting against flood. I thought it was a great model for what the Department of the Interior would have.

And I think you have to look at the Colorado River in that sense, too. I think that the Bureau of Reclamation plays a significant role there, but I think a strong leader being able to find and incentivize those innovations of how do we make sure we are saving water and doing more with the water that we have, rather than fighting over it? And there is a long tradition in the West that “Whiskey is for drinking—water is for fighting,” as we said last week.

Anyway, just speak a little bit about that, of how you look at working with Colorado River, but there are a whole number of river basins that are in drought right now.

Mr. BURGUM. Yes, and we have got a tremendous water resource in this country when we think about the Great Lakes, you think about the Columbia, you think about the Yukon. The Mississippi sometimes is flooding when the Colorado is in drought. We just, maybe, don’t have it in all the right places at the right time, and we have got population centers. And so, I think, again, with, you know, smart planning, innovation, collaboration, when we have been successful in North Dakota with public-private partnerships, it has included, you know, solutions, again, with great help from Senator Hoeven playing a huge role on the federal. I mean, one of the projects we have there is a couple billion dollars. It’s one-third federal, it’s one-third local with the local sales tax, I mean, huge buy-in locally, and then the state stepping up and participating. And when we did that together—this project is going to get done in six and a half or seven years as opposed to 20 or 25, or never, you know, because we have that experience in North Dakota, too. We have water projects at the federal level that were started in the 1960s that still haven’t fulfilled their full mission.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Right.

Mr. BURGUM. So anyway, I think there is an opportunity to work together to come up with solutions.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. And that timeliness does magnify what can get done.

The Bureau of Reclamation has done a lot work in Colorado and across the West, and I think I am universal that I haven’t heard a single senator, Republican or Democrat, complain about how they have approached this. They have a bunch of projects that are midway, and I am hopeful that—I know there is a lot of talk about a tax cut and a lot of talk about how they are going to pay for that tax cut. Hopefully, we can protect those funds that have been committed to various water projects, because the worst thing you can have, and this has happened to Colorado two or three times over

the past several decades, where you get halfway, you are building something and then all of a sudden, the support goes away.

Mr. BURGUM. Yes, agree. I mean, having secure and predictable forms of capital for these projects, when you have the instability, the uncertainty, then the people that are bidding on the projects bid higher. They have to take out more risk on their side. They, you know, there are insurance companies that are supporting them on the private side saying, don't go, don't do this. When we were able to go to the public-private partnership and we could create certainty that they would have the permits, that lowered the cost dramatically, and not only the time to get it done, but it also lowered the cost.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. That is music to my ears, and we agree completely. So we will remember this conversation three years from now, I am sure. Who knows what the future will bring, but I appreciate that commitment to the long-term solutions, I think, that is necessary on almost every level in this country.

Mr. BURGUM. Great, thank you, Senator.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Senator Hoeven.

Senator HOEVEN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

One quick item for the record. As you know, I passed legislation to keep horses in the Theodore Roosevelt National Park. I am a horse fan. You and your wife are horse fans. I just want to know that you will commit for the record to continue to work on that very important issue with me.

Mr. BURGUM. Absolutely. And for the record, people should know that as popular as Senator Hoeven is in our state, the horses in the national park have even more followers on social media than he does.

[Laughter.]

Senator HOEVEN. Yeah, no question.

And then, just one final item. I think you have demonstrated to both sides of the aisle your absolute willingness to work with everybody to achieve good outcomes and a good outcome for this country. And that is exactly what we want in somebody that goes into these important positions. And so, thank you. Thank you to Kathryn. And then, just if there is anything for the record that you want to add to the record, I would just give you this opportunity before turning things back to the Chairman.

And again, I want to thank both the Chairman and the Ranking Member as well.

Mr. BURGUM. Well, the only thing I would do quickly is close with gratitude to Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich. Thank you for your time ahead of time. Thank you for making your members available to me for meetings ahead of time. And thanks for this great dialogue and discussion today.

I received a lot of invitations from members to come and visit. I would be remiss if I didn't, before I leave, extend an invitation on behalf of Senator Hoeven, Senator Cramer, and myself to come to the grand opening of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, which is currently scheduled for July 4, 2026. And it's an official USA 250 event, and of course, it's going to be an opportunity to tell the story of leadership and citizenship and

conservation that really began during the time when Theodore Roosevelt spent time in North Dakota. His wife and his mother tragically died on the same day in the same house, on Valentine's Day of 1884. And he had a newborn infant daughter that was two days old. He handed that off to his sister and he got on the train and he was deeply despondent and went West and remade himself from—he had a childhood that was full of sickness, and he went from a sickly easterner and became a rough-and-tumble westerner, a cowboy, learned the hard way out there with a lot of time in the saddle and built the Elkhorn Ranch.

And from then, he developed his thoughts about conservation in this country, and we know the story that went from there. That, you know, led him to become the Rough Rider that he was, that propelled him into becoming a governor, formed the National Governors' Association, saved football, I mean, now the largest viewed sport, and the NCAA was formed because Theodore Roosevelt was listening to concerns from mothers, as too many of their sons were dying of head injuries playing football in the Ivy League schools, without protections. And so, he said, let's come up with some standard safety protections.

So there are many stories about T.R. that haven't been told, like that, but the only President to receive a Medal of Honor for his time in the military, one of his sons also received a Medal of Honor, who was there at Normandy in World War II, but an incredible story. And of course, the Nobel Peace Prize that he received for negotiating the settlement between Russia and Japan. And he wrote more books than all the other Presidents combined. He wrote more letters than Jefferson and Washington. We are in the process of digitizing all of that. This will be first digital presidential library. It will be one of the most sustainable buildings built in North America. And it's in the heart of the Badlands that he loved, at a gateway community that goes into the Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

And in closing, I would say, you know, someone asked, this Fourth of July are you going to have fireworks per tradition when you open a presidential library? All living Presidents are invited, so we may, if they all show up, we may not need to have additional fireworks.

[Laughter.]

Mr. BURGUM. But it will be great because there is a lot of what we know about Theodore Roosevelt that still lives on today, and think about the discussions we are having. The Panama Canal wouldn't have happened without him, and how important that was for our country during World War II, and how important it is for our future going forward.

And water, of course, in Arizona, some of the original water systems in Arizona were dedicated and created by Theodore Roosevelt. One of the first wildlife refuges that he made in the country was in North Dakota at Stump Lake. He sent us on a way to build out the National Park System as we know it right now. So it's with a bit of serendipity and a great amount of excitement that, as Secretary of Interior, I will look forward to being at that opening along with all of you. This Committee is all officially invited as of right now. It would be great to have you all there.

And with that, again, thank you, Senators, and especially, thank you Senators Hoeven and Cramer, for your support, your friendship, and your mentorship for all these years.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Governor.

It has been a great hearing, and I appreciate the participation of all the members of the staff, members of the Committee, and especially our Capitol Police force for keeping us safe today.

I am sure that given all the time he spent in North Dakota, Theodore Roosevelt learned correctly to pronounce the name of the animal that is called the "Bizon."

[Laughter.]

Senator BURGUM. It does have a z, I agree with Senator Hoeven.

The CHAIRMAN. It's got a z. It's a z. Well it's not a silent z, it's just an invisible one.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. With all that—

Senator KING. Mr. Chairman, do you know what the lady buffalo said to her little boy as he was going off to school?

The CHAIRMAN. Oh no, oh no, I don't. What did she say?

Senator KING. "Bye, son."

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. That's it.

Senator KING. I would also mention that Teddy Roosevelt—

Senator HOEVEN. I love it. I just love it.

The CHAIRMAN. Going to open up a whole new debate—

Senator KING. He coined the term "malefactors of great wealth." I will just leave it at that.

The CHAIRMAN. Hoeven is going to be telling that one for weeks.

The record will stand open until 6:00 p.m. today for questions for the record.

We stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:08 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDIX MATERIAL SUBMITTED

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Questions from Chairman Mike Lee

Question 1: The Colorado River is a lifeline for the West, but its future depends on balanced and collaborative management. Federal overreach in past negotiations has often sidelined states, including Utah, that are closest to the issue and most affected by decisions.

How should states take the lead in negotiating agreements related to the Colorado River?

Response: The Colorado River is a critical water resource for the seven basin states. It provides drinking water to 40 million people, is home to 30 Tribes, irrigates 4 million acres of farmland, including 90% of the Nation's winter vegetables, generates enough hydropower for almost 800,000 households, fosters recreational opportunities and contains fish and wildlife habitat. The Colorado River is governed by what's called the Law of the River, a collection of compacts, federal and state statutes, court decisions, a treaty with Mexico and agreements between the seven states and the federal government, Tribes and others. Each of these items allowed for the development and allocation of the River and is a result of a series of negotiations between various parties. The seven basin states are leaders in helping find a long-term agreement post-2026. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the states, Tribes and other parties to foster further dialogue to help find a durable resolution to this pressing matter.

Question 2: As a governor, you are likely familiar with the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program. This program was created to compensate state, county, and local governments for the inability to collect property taxes on federal lands. However, PILT payments have historically been only a fraction of what property taxes would generate, leaving schools, police and fire departments, and communities underfunded.

Would you agree with me that DOI should make PILT a budget priority? And more generally, what reforms, if any, would you propose to the PILT program to address concerns about long-term reliability?

Response: The Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) Program provides payments to states to offset losses in property taxes due to nontaxable public lands within their boundaries. The Department of the Interior is obligated, by law, to annually distribute PILT payments to applicable states in accordance with established formulas set by law. These funds help local governments offset the costs for essential services such as firefighting, police services, and construction of schools. As a Governor, I deeply understand the challenges of providing essential services in rural areas. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and other policymakers on the challenges associated with PILT payments and I will work to ensure we implement this law faithfully when it comes to payments to PILT counties.

Question 3: The permitting process for energy and mineral development on federal lands has become a major bottleneck for projects critical to national security and economic growth. According to a recent report from S&P Global, the total lead time for developing a new critical

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

mineral mine takes an average of 29 years in the U.S., second only to Zambia for the slowest in the world. China has already begun to sever its exports of several essential minerals. We need to make sure that we do not fall behind.

What do you plan to do as Secretary to speed up this process?

Response: According to the 2024 Mineral Commodity Summary published by the United States Geological Survey, in 2023, imports made up more than one-half of the U.S. consumption for 49 nonfuel mineral commodities. The United States was 100% net import reliant for 15 of those minerals and China and Canada were the leading foreign import sources. The USGS plays an important role in assisting our Nation to identify the location of these important resources, including areas where such important resources can be found in commercial quantities on public lands. In such areas where minerals may be found on federal lands, it is very likely that the commercial development of a locatable mineral will be applicable to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, the Mining Law of 1872, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Clean Water Act of 1972, and the Clean Air Act of 1970, to name just a few. Navigating the regulatory structures of these statutory obligations in these many different agencies concurrently is understandably daunting. If confirmed, I will work hard to find meaningful yet lawful efficiencies to reduce permitting delays, increase regulatory certainty, and promote access to our nation's critical mineral resources.

Question 4: Restricting access to federal lands harms local economies and increases the risk of catastrophic wildfires by limiting grazing, timber harvesting, and other active management practices. Recreation is also stifled, cutting off opportunities for the public to enjoy these lands.

What is your perspective on balancing conservation with ensuring access for grazing, recreation, and active management? How would you address the wildfire crisis through improved land management practices?

Response: Fuels management is an important aspect of federal land management for all of the Department of the Interior land management bureaus. Once confirmed, I will work to ensure aggressive use of all tools available, including but not limited to, mechanical thinning, timber salvage sales, prescribed burns, and targeted livestock grazing along with better implementation of categorical exclusions to enable responsible activity in a timely manner in order to reduce fuel loads and better address wildfire risk.

Questions from Ranking Member Martin Heinrich

Question 1: Conservation easements provide mutual benefit for landowners, sportsmen, and the wildlife that depend on these landscapes. Easements are also an important tool for keeping working lands intact. Do you support the continued use of conservation easements?

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Response: Voluntary conservation easements are often used as an alternative to fee acquisition to help an agency achieve conservation value while allowing the land to remain in private ownership. Private landowners have played a key role in protecting and promoting habitat conservation throughout the nation. As a life-long sportsman, I know firsthand the importance of conserving habitat to support healthy wildlife populations and I look forward to working with you on this important issue, if confirmed.

Question 2: As a hunter, you know the importance of sportsmen access and wildlife habitat facilitated through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), but LWCF is also a tool of good governance. Federal land agencies enjoy significant cost savings by resolving checkerboard land patterns which complicate management and frustrate access. LWCF keeps working forests in production and creates, protects, and enhances recreation opportunities. How do you view LWCF as a tool to maximize recreation and sportsmen opportunities and improve federal land management?

Response: Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established by Congress in 1964 to assist in preserving, developing, and assuring accessibility to outdoor recreation resources and to strengthen the health and vitality of our citizens through greater recreational access. Today, the LWCF is primarily funded from receipts from offshore oil and natural gas development on the federal OCS and funds have been used, especially at the state level, to acquire and conserve important lands that promote recreational use, including hunting and fishing – including many youth baseball fields, campgrounds, playground, and other state park upgrades in my home state of North Dakota. I look forward to working with you and your colleagues on this and other important programs that seek to increase recreational access for our citizens.

Question 3: The property clause of the United States Constitution reads in part that— “The Congress shall Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States...”. The Federal Land Policy and Management Act was passed by Congress in 1976 to implement that provision of the Constitution for lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service. Will you commit to managing public lands in accordance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and the property clause of the Constitution?

Response: I will commit to managing our nation’s public lands in accordance with all applicable laws, including the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

Question 4: Prior to taking any action that would reduce the size of a national monument or other public land protection, will you commit to personally meeting with leaders of any tribes that have a historic or current-day connection with the area protected?

Response: I look forward to working with Tribes and believe tribal input is incredibly important. Ultimately, the Antiquities Act of 1906 grants the President the authority to designate or change monument boundaries. Should a decision be made by the President related to a national monument, I will follow all applicable laws.

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Question 5: The Colorado River Basin gets all the headlines. However, long-term aridification is also permanently reducing water supplies in the Rio Grande Basin. How will the Department address aridification in the Rio Grande Basin and make sure that drought resiliency projects continue to be prioritized and funded in every basin that needs them?

Response: Like many basins throughout the Western United States, drought continues to have a negative impact on communities and the environment in the Rio Grande Basin. I look forward to learning more about the specific impacts and the tools that have been used to mitigate drought in the Rio Grande Basin and will work with you on this effort, if confirmed.

Question 6: President-elect Trump signed the Great American Outdoors Act into law in 2020, permanently funding one of the most successful conservation programs in our nation's history, the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Even with the funding provided by that law, there are more projects proposed by local communities than funding available to complete them. Will you continue the Trump administration's support for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and support funding for locally supported projects?

Response: The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was enacted in 1965 and has provided significant funds to the federal, state and local governments and communities for a wide range of locally supported projects that promote recreation for our nation's citizens. The Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) provided \$900 million annually in permanent funding for LWCF. Within that GAOA framework, the Executive branch proposes LWCF funding allocations in the annual budget request process and Congress reviews these proposals as part of the annual appropriations process, followed by Executive branch implementation. This process requires a collaborative partnership between the two branches from the beginning to the end, with the Department of the Interior playing a key role. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you on the future of LWCF funding.

Question 7: Our country's relationships with the Freely Associated States—that's the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of Palau—are a critical strategic asset in our efforts to counter the influence of the Chinese Government in the Pacific. Last year, Congress approved funding to implement the Compacts of Free Association with these independent nations over the next 20 years, and it's the responsibility of the Interior Department to oversee that implementation. Will you commit to regularly briefing Congress on the implementation of the Compact of Free Association Amendments Act of 2023?

Response: Yes. If confirmed, I look forward to briefing Congress on implementation of this law.

Question 8: You were nominated to be Secretary of the Interior and not head of the National Energy Council, which isn't a statutory office and does not exist in law. But the President-elect has made known his intent for you to serve in both roles. The Secretary of the Interior is the

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

guardian of the American people over their public lands—not just for this generation, but for future generations as well. The National Energy Council seems designed to make energy production dominant over other values and uses of public land. How will you balance these competing interests?

Response: As I stated in my response to a live hearing question from Senator Hoeven regarding the National Energy Council, the intent is for the Council to be a convening opportunity for agencies that have statutory authorities that affect our nation's energy policies to coordinate. The goal, as stated by President Trump, is to reduce red tape and bureaucratic redundancy between agencies. Historically, presidents of both parties have convened similar interagency or taskforces to serve a policy coordination function within the Executive Branch. Agencies will still need to act within their statutory authorities in the implementation of any policies in accordance with the law.

Question 9: There have been reports of non-federal, non-contractor "volunteers" entering federal agencies to receive briefings on information that is not available to the public, just because Elon Musk has said they're volunteering for him. Public servants are required to comply with federal ethics and privacy laws and swear an oath to the constitution for a reason. These volunteers are subject to no oversight or accountability. Are you going to allow Elon Musk's "volunteers" to access information at the Interior Department that's not available to regular Americans? Will you hold them to the same ethics, privacy, and transparency rules as federal employees and contractors?

Response: While the details on the efforts to establish the Department of Government Efficiency and its purported interface with federal agencies has yet to be directed, the President has clearly articulated his hopes to increase efficiency within the federal government. The Department of the Interior has long had a familiarity with the public comment and public input process, which in some cases is enshrined in its relevant organic acts. If confirmed, I will see to it that the Department will follow the law as well as the advice of our designated agency ethics official (DAEO) with regard to engagement with DOGE, just as we would with any number of federal and nonfederal stakeholders.

Question 10: A proposal to permanently increase the pay of wildland firefighters at the Department of the Interior has bipartisan support here in Congress. Both the House and Senate appropriations bills for fiscal year 2025 included that permanent pay increase and the funding necessary to implement it. Will you commit to supporting a permanent increase to the salaries of federal wildland firefighters?

Response: Wildland firefighters are some of the most important and courageous employees within the Department of the Interior. I believe that their pay should certainly reflect the level of risk that they assume in that role. Should legislation be enacted to increase wildland firefighter pay, I would follow the law to ensure that the Department administered any such increase, if confirmed.

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Question 11: If confirmed, will you commit to preserving the scientific integrity of the Department of the Interior and U.S. Geological Survey's work, to preserve its independence from political interference, and to deliver unbiased scientific findings to the Administration, Congress, and the public?

Response: **If confirmed, I will ensure that the Department follows all applicable laws governing scientific work and data transparency.**

Question 12: At the end of the year, Congress raised the authorization for the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project temporarily by \$770 million to meet the commitments the federal government made in its settlement with the Navajo Nation for the San Juan Basin. Completion of the project will provide a critical new source of water for Navajo Nation, Jicarilla Apache Nation, and the City of Gallup. If confirmed, will you support making the \$770 million increase in authorization permanent, and providing the funding to allow completion of the project by the Bureau of Reclamation?

Response: **Tribal water rights settlements can help provide certainty to tribal and non-tribal communities through water supply availability and can help reduce legal liability for the federal government and other entities. Many of the federally enacted water rights settlements require federal and state funding and actions necessary to complete the plans implementing the settlements. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you on this and other tribal water rights settlements.**

Question 13: If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to ensure that Tribal consultation is a meaningful and enforceable process, rather than a box checking formality?

Response: **As Governor, tribal engagement was important to me. I worked extensively with Tribes, listened and had meaningful dialogue. If confirmed, I will continue this commitment and follow the Department's applicable regulations on Tribal consultation.**

Question 14: If confirmed, what steps would you take to improve public safety on Tribal lands, particularly as it relates to the Department of the Interior's collaboration with the Department of Justice?

Response: **During my time as Governor of North Dakota, I identified three areas of joint concern with our Tribes for which the Federal response must be improved; one, more efficient and effective allocation of resources for basic law enforcement in Indian Country; two, addressing the crisis of drug trafficking across Indian Country; three, addressing the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples. If confirmed, I commit to working closely with our Federally recognized Tribes and the Department of Justice, our federal partner for law enforcement in Indian Country, to improve law enforcement and public safety in Tribal communities.**

Question 15: If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples, particularly as it concerns improve interagency coordination on

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

public safety and those agencies' investigative capacity to ensure Tribal and BIA law enforcement are adequately resourced and supported?

Response: On November 26, 2019, President Trump signed Executive Order 13898, forming the Task Force on Missing and Murdered American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) and initiating Operation Lady Justice. I am pleased that the current Administration continued this effort. Based on the consultations and report of the Operation Lady Justice Task Force and the subsequent reports and recommendations required by the Not Invisible Act Commission, I will work with the Department of Justice and tribal, state and local law enforcement agencies to continue addressing this ongoing crisis across Indian Country if confirmed.

Question 16: If confirmed, how will you collaborate with the Department of Justice and Tribal governments to implement recommendations in the Not Invisible Act Commission's recent report?

Response: As stated above, I believe the work already started will be an important stepping off point in continuing this important effort, and if confirmed, I look forward to reviewing further this report and working with you on this important issue.

Question 17: If confirmed, how would you approach the challenges of managing water resources under the Bureau of Reclamation and the Secretary of Interior's Water Rights Office to ensure fair management among Tribal, municipal, agricultural, commercial, and environmental interests, particularly with respect to Indian water rights settlements and negotiations?

Response: The Secretary of the Interior's Indian Water Rights Office, along with the Bureau of Reclamation, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other federal departments and agencies, play key roles in fostering dialogue, providing technical and legislative drafting assistance and other important items necessary to enact settlements that avoid protracted and costly litigation and provide water supply certainty for tribal and non-tribal communities. Tribal water rights settlements can provide water supply certainty to tribal and non-tribal water users and resolve legal claims between tribal and non-tribal parties, federal and state governments and other entities. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing these important Interior Department missions.

Question 18: Many Tribal communities still lack reliable access to clean drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. If confirmed, what specific actions will you take to address these inequities and support Tribal water security?

Response: The Secretary of the Interior's Indian Water Rights Office, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and other agencies within the Department of the Interior provide water supply project assistance to Tribal and other communities, mainly through enacted Tribal water rights settlements and grants. I understand that the Indian Health Service within the Department of Health and Human Services has responsibility for wastewater infrastructure. As the former Governor of North Dakota, I am very aware of

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

the challenges many tribal communities face in receiving some of the most basic public services, including the need for access to water. If confirmed, I look forward to working with my colleagues within the federal government on this important issue.

Question 19: Will you commit to improving the implementation and enforcement of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and the protection of Tribal cultural heritage from looting, destruction, trafficking, and exploitation pursuant to federal law?

Response: The protection of Tribal graves and cultural heritage is a solemn responsibility of the Department and the Department of Justice. If confirmed, I commit to reviewing the Department's current efforts to meet its statutory duties and our trust responsibility to Tribes. I also commit to working closely with the Attorney General to assist the DOJ in their prosecution of criminal violations of the NAGPRA.

Question 20: Tribes have significant untapped energy potential on their lands, but face institutional barriers to developing these resources. Tribes must have the ability to determine their own energy futures – renewable or otherwise. If confirmed, how will you support Tribes in accessing funding, technical assistance, and streamlined permitting processes for energy projects that Tribes want to pursue?

Response: In my experience as Governor and working with the North Dakota Tribes, Tribes are not alone in also facing significant bureaucratic hurdles that impede the responsible development of their energy resources. All too often administrative responsibility for processing leases, permits, and communization agreements, among other permitting requirements, are split among several Departmental bureaus, which may further complicate the actual development of resources. If confirmed, I will reinvigorate efforts to streamline this permitting and explore the use of all Tribal energy development tools that Congress had provided to assist in the responsible permitting and development of these important resources.

Question 21: In 2021, the Department launched the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative. The Department held listening sessions across the country with survivors and their families. If confirmed, will you commit to continuing this work, including advocating for additional funding in the President's budget and supporting federal legislation?

Response: I know the history of Federal Indian Board Schools is incredibly painful for many, and that the former Secretary of the Interior worked hard to shed light on this important issue. While many of the recommendations from the investigative report associated with this initiative are not within the administrative jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior, I look forward to reviewing those recommendations and if confirmed, I will work with you on this important matter.

Questions from Senator James E. Risch

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*

Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Question 1: Idaho is nicknamed the Gem State, but is also home to significant deposits of hardrock minerals as well, such as gold, silver, phosphate, antimony, cobalt, and many others. Given the skyrocketing demand for minerals in the energy transition and the national security risks of increasing reliance on foreign countries, these mineral resources should be a boon. However, regulations under past administrations have made it nearly impossible to extract and process these minerals.

- a. Will you commit to working with Idaho and industry to find ways to increase responsible mineral production on federal lands?

Response: Our nation is home to extensive mineral resources that are developed under world-leading environmental and labor standards. These minerals power our world, yet many deposits here on U.S. soil have been untapped or unexplored due to onerous and duplicative permitting processes. As a result, global adversaries take advantage of the lagging U.S. mineral supply chain, and our mineral import dependence grows. We have the technology and capabilities to extract minerals here at home in a safe and environmentally conscious way, and if confirmed, I look forward to working with all stakeholders to increase responsible mineral production on federal lands.

Question 2: Outdoor recreation is a multi-billion dollar industry in the state of Idaho, and relies heavily on our vast public lands and spirit of collaboration with other multiple uses and local residents. However, the past administration felt it was necessary to pit various multiple uses against each other with their misguided public lands rule.

- a. Given your support for resource development on public lands, do you believe that various multiple uses including recreation, mining, grazing, and timber harvest can coexist?

Response: I believe that these various multiple uses can generally coexist on federal lands. While there are certainly some specific instances in which different uses can be in conflict, it is my commitment to find ways to avoid such conflict when possible and fully carry out the statutory directive of multiple use in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

- b. If confirmed, will you commit to prioritize community and industry input to support local economies and multiple use lands?

Response: Land management decisions are often inherently local decisions, and it is my commitment to listen to states, local governments, Tribes, stakeholders, and affected communities when making these important decisions.

Question 3: Across the West, grazing on public lands has become stymied by increasingly inflexible federal regulations where on-the-ground management is largely prevented. Particularly in areas with repeated fire history, BLM needs the flexibility to adaptively manage fuel loads through grazing.

- a. Can I count on you to work with me to increase flexibility and reduce fire risk for grazing on BLM lands?

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Response: Yes, BLM land managers should avail themselves of all authorities and tools available to address fire risk, especially where doing so can be mutually beneficial for other uses pursuant to BLM's multiple use and sustained yield mandate under FLPMA, such as selective grazing to reduce wildfire fuel loads.

Question 4: As authorized by Congress, the federal dams in the Northwest provide a tremendous amount of power to ratepayers in my state, as well as transportation of various products and other benefits. This electricity is affordable, clean, reliable, and dependable and should not be used as a political football as millions of people in our region face affordability, resource adequacy, and grid reliability challenges. Despite this, hydropower dams in the Northwest were constantly targeted by the last administration.

- a. Are you supportive of our hydropower resources and can I count on the opportunity to engage with you on how to correct the numerous ill-conceived promises of the Biden Administration when it comes to Northwest hydropower as it relates to the Department of Interior?

Response: Hydropower is one of the most important and affordable forms of electricity in this Nation. The Bureau of Reclamation, within the Department of the Interior, is the second leading domestic producer of hydropower while the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the leading producer. These two agencies, along with the Department of Energy's Bonneville Power Administration, form the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS), which generates and delivers approximately one-third of the electricity used in the Pacific Northwest. The FCRPS's 31 hydroelectric projects help provide an economic backbone to the region and allow the Columbia and Snake Rivers to continue as multiple use working rivers. At a time when our Nation's electricity needs will continue to grow at exponential rates, it makes little sense to undermine existing and proven federal hydropower resources. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and my federal partners in other departments and agencies on the future of these facilities.

Question 5: Idaho has many different species in varying levels of protection under the Endangered Species Act, like grizzly bears. Unfortunately, the status of these species is stagnant, without regard to their actual recovery goals. If confirmed, will you work with local wildlife managers to accurately assess the status of these species, and adjust ESA listings as needed?

Response: As a former Governor, I know that states are the leaders in wildlife management and protection and are vitally important partners with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in developing management and recovery strategies backed by the best available science. I commit to working with states to determine the appropriate status of those species as directed by the Endangered Species Act.

Questions from Senator Ron Wyden

Question 1: Oregon is a diverse state and in rural, southeast Oregon we have a treasured landscape—the Owyhee—where there has been longstanding conflict between tribes, ranchers, environmentalists, outdoor recreationists, and the federal government. These stakeholders have

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

coalesced around a vision for the future of the landscape that I have championed in legislation. Representative Cliff Bentz and I have committed to working to pass that legislation this Congress. Will you commit to supporting this locally-crafted effort and implementing the legislation as intended once passed?

Response: I believe it is important for public land management solutions to include significant collaboration that considers local input for those who are closest to the land. Should legislation be signed into law, I will work to faithfully implement the law.

Question 2: It has been reported this afternoon that you “pledged to work with states in exploring ways public lands can be used to help address housing shortages. And [you] vowed careful consultation with state and local interests on some issues of land management, responding to Republicans who say local interests were disregarded in some national monument designations.” I want to make sure this sort of respect for local interests expands to places that do not want energy development and who want wilderness or other special designations. Will it?

Response: If confirmed, I will commit to managing our nation’s public lands in accordance with all applicable laws, including the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, which includes local input.

Question 3: In the first Trump administration, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke undertook a massive “review” of Antiquities Act designations and tried to shrink popular national monuments. This move was illegal and hugely unpopular—do you plan to undertake any similar review of existing national monuments?

Response: The Antiquities Act of 1906 grants the President the authority to designate or change monument boundaries.

Question 4: I support the authority Congress gave the President to identify the need to protect special places in our nation using the Antiquities Act. I also believe that only Congress has the ability to eliminate national monuments. If it chooses to do so, it is likely doing so in response to local constituent input. There must be a careful balance between local and national interests because these public lands are owned by all Americans. Will you help direct the Trump Administration to support this careful balance?

Response: If requested by the President, I will advise him to consider all factors in accordance with the Antiquities Act of 1906.

Question 5: Will you commit to increasing wildfire response capabilities within the Department of the Interior, including supporting enhanced fair pay for wildland firefighters, and ensuring that wildfire response and recovery is unhindered by political interference?

Response: I believe that we should give our wildland firefighters every authority possible to achieve their mission and enhance their capabilities to combat dangerous and costly wildfires that threaten our communities. If confirmed I will work with each of the several

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

entities within DOI responsible for wildfire management and response to ensure that those entities and their firefighters that serve our communities have the tools and resources that they need to respond to the threat of wildfires safely and effectively.

Question 6: Please explain how you plan to address the hazardous fuels backlog on federal public lands when much of the fire risk is the result of hazardous material that has little commercial value?

Response: If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the organizations within the Department of the Interior have the regulatory flexibility to reduce hazardous materials and conduct fuels treatments wherever appropriate, and that those organizations identify opportunities where the reduction of fuel materials may also yield a benefit to the American taxpayer.

Question 7: One of the premier pieces of legislation passed last congress originated in this committee: EXPLORE Act. I was a proud sponsor of a core component of that bill, Recreation Not Red-Tape, as were other members of the committee. How do you plan to implement critical legislation like the EXPLORE Act and be responsive to legislative deadlines and inquiries on its progress?

Response: Outdoor recreation is good for the economy, and it is good for the health of Americans. Congress acknowledged this last year with the passage of the EXPLORE Act. As Governor of North Dakota, I established a state office of outdoor recreation to ensure comprehensive planning and execution of successful policies, strategies, and initiatives to maximize the impact of the \$1.3 billion outdoor recreation economy in my state. The outdoor recreation economy contributes more than \$1.3 trillion to our national GDP. If confirmed, the implementation of the EXPLORE Act will be a priority for me, just like promoting outdoor recreation was a priority for me as Governor.

Question 8: You have shared your belief in the importance of multiple uses of public lands. Are some uses more important than other uses? How do you measure that?

Response: If confirmed, I will look to the definition of multiple use provided by Congress in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, codified at 43 U.S.C. 1702(c), in evaluating the importance of various uses of public land. In short, multiple use means the management of the public lands and resources so they are used in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people.

Question 9: The Department of the Interior recently misinterpreted the law and made the truly unfortunate decision to approve an application to develop a new tribal casino in Medford. This decision harms other Oregon tribes and ignites a gambling arms race in my state. Will you work with me to look at all options available to the Department to address this flawed casino approval and mitigate the resulting harm to Oregon tribes and communities?

Response: If confirmed, I will work with you to examine and review what options, if appropriate, are available with respect to this decision.

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Question 10: Will you commit to requesting an increase in Bureau of Indian Affairs funding as compared to current levels to an amount sufficient to meet the U.S. Government's trust and treaty obligations to tribes?

Response: If confirmed, I will commit to working with stakeholders to ensure that the Department requests and expends the appropriate amount of funding to help meet Tribal needs.

Question 11: The U.S. is facing increasing demand for electricity from households and businesses. Tax preferences for oil, gas, and clean energy help deploy new energy projects quickly and at lower costs. Is the U.S. going to produce more or less energy over the next few years if Republicans repeal the Inflation Reduction Act incentives?

Response: President Trump has been clear about his promise to increase domestic energy production, both to lower costs for American consumers and to make America energy dominant across the globe. However, new energy projects are hindered by inefficient permitting. If confirmed, I look forward to supporting President Trump's agenda by cutting unnecessary red tape and implementing the law as enacted by Congress.

Question 12: Experts at the Treasury Department, the Department of Energy, and the Department of Agriculture collaborate to develop and administer clean fuel standards and rules for biofuels and renewable natural gas. As energy czar, how will you support this work?

Response: The Department of Interior has no statutory role as it relates to the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS). The National Energy Council will serve as a forum for federal agencies with statutory authorities relating to energy policy to coordinate, improve policymaking efficiency, and reduce duplication and redundancy. I will facilitate that coordination but will not prejudge nor direct agencies that have explicit statutory authorities granted by Congress regarding the RFS or other biofuel-related policies.

Question 13: You have raised concerns about impacts that energy tax incentives passed in the Inflation Reduction Act are having on the amount of available baseload power in the United States. You have also agreed that the combination of renewable energy and battery storage is the future to achieving baseload power, but until we have enough energy storage we will need to rely on fossil fuels. Will you protect the incentives, and the jobs they created, that allow our nation and economy to transition to renewable energy and energy storage?

Response: The Constitution grants revenue powers to Congress in Article I. The Department of the Interior will have no role in implementing, much less legislating, these tax policies. If confirmed, I will implement the statutes enacted by Congress that direct actions by the Department of Interior.

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Question 14: Baseload power is critically important especially as energy demand is on the rise, and it is important to optimize the energy resources we already have. Will you support existing tax credits that incentivize energy efficiency?

Response: The Constitution grants revenue powers to Congress in Article I. The Department of the Interior will have no role in implementing, much less legislating, these tax policies. If confirmed, I will implement the statutes enacted by Congress that direct actions by the Department of the Interior.

Question 15: Energy affordability is of paramount importance. According to a new analysis, repeal of the Inflation Reduction Act would raise energy prices by an average of 10% for consumers across the country. In some states it would be much higher—over \$250/year for households in four states, for example. How will you ensure Americans continue to enjoy the clean energy and energy-saving benefits that will lower costs while ensuring cleaner air and water? In what ways will the administration advance the development of low-carbon and low-cost energy sources?

Response: The Department of the Interior oversees America's public lands and natural resources held in the public trust. If confirmed, I will implement the laws concerning energy development on public lands as enacted by Congress.

Question 16: You reportedly played a role in facilitating a closed-door meeting where President-elect Trump promised fossil fuel executives he would eliminate oil regulations for them if they donated \$1 billion to his campaign. Have you ever played any role in meetings between oil executives and President-elect Trump where both public policy and campaign contributions were discussed?

Response: President Trump is a leader who understands energy security means national security and economic prosperity. Given the importance of energy production, President Trump routinely talks about the subject at rallies, in media interviews, on social media, and in non-public settings. His Energy Dominance message is consistent regardless of venue. I've previously condemned insinuations in media interviews that were made about the referenced meeting, and I respectfully reject the characterization above.

Question 17: Will you recuse yourself from overseeing the federal oil and gas leasing program due to your financial investments and relationships with oil executives like Harold Hamm?

Response: We worked diligently with the OGE to reach an agreement that I will follow.

Question 18: President Biden recently took action to withdraw 250 million acres of federal waters off the coast of California, Oregon and Washington from new oil and gas development. It was an action with strong local support and one I pursued on behalf of Oregon's coastal communities in my state at their request. Can you assure me that you will respect the strong

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

regional and local interest and will not take any actions to develop new oil and gas off the West Coast?

Response: The authority surrounding withdrawals and rescissions of these withdrawals on the Outer Continental Shelf has been granted by Congress to the President in the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act.

Question 19: Will you commit to ensuring the Department of the Interior responds to all Freedom of Information Act requests as expeditiously as possible?

Response: I will follow all applicable laws with respect to the Freedom of Information Act.

Question 20: Congress passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, CHIPS and Science Act, and Inflation Reduction Act, which are creating significant jobs and growth across the U.S. The DOI is responsible for administering billions of dollars from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act. Will you support the implementation of these laws in ways that support the new American jobs they have created?

Response: If confirmed, I will implement the laws as enacted by Congress.

Question 21: The Department of the Interior signed a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Labor to apply high-road labor standards to all Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funded projects. Will you uphold these standards?

Response: If confirmed, I will implement the laws as enacted by Congress.

Question 22: Will you prevent any political interference in science-based decision-making processes within the agency including, but not limited to, Endangered Species Act listing, delisting and critical habitat designations?

Response: If confirmed, I will implement the laws as enacted by Congress.

Questions from Senator Steve Daines

Question 1: Governor Burgum, Montana faces serious hurdles to implementing forest management projects due to litigation. This situation was exacerbated in 2015 when the Ninth Circuit ruled in *Cottonwood Environmental Law Center v. U.S. Forest Service*, that a forest plan was an ongoing federal action. This creates a cyclical procedural requirement to consult under the Endangered Species Act after a new species is listed, new critical habitat is designated, or “new information” is found. Across states in the Ninth Circuit, we have seen hundreds of projects delayed while the Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service attempted to meet an ambiguous standard with no on-the-ground impact. I have introduced legislation that would fix this disastrous decision. Will you commit to working with Congress to ensure a permanent solution is found either through administrative action or through this legislative fix?

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Response: I know this is an important issue and if confirmed, I will work with you to examine and review what options, if appropriate, are available with respect to this decision.

Question 2: Governor Burgum, we have seen a rise of serial litigators who weaponize the courts to delay forest management projects until they are no longer economically viable. In some cases, we have seen irreparable harm result when wildfires burned forest management project areas that were on hold. These litigants are often working on the taxpayer's dime, receiving attorney's fees under the Equal Access to Justice Act and payments from the Judgement Fund. Sue-and-settle practices established by the Obama administration and revived under the Biden administration further incentivized these litigants. President-elect Trump has made clear his intent to increase accountability and transparency within federal agencies and reduce our federal deficit. Do you believe litigation reform will play a role in this?

Response: If confirmed, I will work to restore transparency to this process.

Question 3: Governor Burgum, the Mineral Leasing Act requires the Bureau of Land Management to hold quarterly oil and gas lease sales. Do you agree that the BLM should follow existing law and return to regularly held quarterly lease sale in Montana and other oil and gas producing states?

Response: Yes. If confirmed, I will return to the practices of the Trump Administration of holding quarterly lease sales as required by the Mineral Leasing Act.

Question 4: Governor Burgum, as discussed during the hearing, our National Parks are the crown jewels of our beautiful country. Will you commit to working with me to support national park units, both the frequently visited parks like Glacier and Yellowstone and the smaller parks like Little Bighorn Battlefield and Grant-Kohrs Ranch?

Response: Yes. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and Congress to support our National Park System.

Question 5: Governor Burgum, do you agree that one of the ways to increase domestic energy production while also reducing permitting delays and environmental footprints is to leverage existing assets, including expanding existing pipelines and transmission lines, or through innovative technology to increase existing well production and re-process mine waste?

Response. Yes. Technological innovation is a critical aspect of responsible energy development - it not only creates jobs but helps reduce consumer costs as energy demand grows. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you on these initiatives.

Question 6: Governor Burgum, the Bureau of Reclamation is currently working to address the catastrophic failure of two siphons from the St. Mary River that are a critical part of the Milk River Project that provides water to irrigators on Montana's Hi-Line. Will you work with Reclamation and the farmers and ranchers on the Hi-Line and use all available resources at your disposal to ensure the repairs are completed as quickly as possible?

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Response: If confirmed, I will work with you and your constituents to help expedite, as practicable, the process recently initiated by the Bureau of Reclamation to repair the syphons and restore water supply.

Question 7: Governor Burgum, as you know the United States and the Department of the Interior have a trust responsibility to protect the rights, lands, and resources of Native American tribes. Will you commit to ensuring that trust responsibility is met, curbing bureaucratic hurdles to distribute vital resources to Indian Country, and working with Montana tribes to uphold Tribal sovereignty?

Response: If confirmed, I will commit to working and consulting with Tribes to address the bureaucratic hurdles they face to better improve the Department's delivery of programs, services, and resources to them, and thus better meet the Department's trust responsibilities to Tribes.

Question 8: Do you agree that it is necessary for Congress to finish outstanding Tribal water compacts to ensure that both tribal and non-tribal water users have certainty over their water claims and usage?

Response: If confirmed, I look forward to continuing working with you on finishing outstanding Tribal water compact and settlements.

Questions from Senator Mazie K. Hirono

Question 1: Hawaii is the Endangered Species Capital of the World because of the large number of endangered species we have compared to our small landmass. These species are critical to our environment and to our culture.

Climate change, pests, and other factors are threatening our native species in Hawaii. During the last Trump administration, the Department of the Interior prioritized the gas and oil industry at the expense of endangered species.

Do you acknowledge that part of the Department's mission is to protect endangered species? If so, how do you balance that with a President who is focused on drilling at a massive scale?

Response: Yes, the Secretary of the Interior is responsible for implementing the Endangered Species Act. This law was enacted in 1973 and its goals and objectives have been met for more than 50 years, at the same time drilling and other natural resource development have been happening. I am confident that, if confirmed, I will be able to continue managing imperiled species and resource development in a balanced manner, just as my predecessors have done.

Question 2: During the last Trump administration, an alarming number of scientists left the federal government due to low morale and hostile work environments, including at the U.S.

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Geological Survey and the Fish and Wildlife Service. We in Hawaii rely heavily on science to tell us when to expect a volcanic eruption, how best to protect and conserve our native species, when high tides are expected to cover our coastal highways, and more.

Do you value science and if so, what will you do as Secretary to ensure that the Department retains scientific expertise?

Response: I do value science. I believe it is important to consider the input of career scientists along with other career professionals to inform decision making. If confirmed, I will implement the laws as enacted by Congress.

Question 3: Under the previous Trump administration, both Interior Secretaries ran into ethics violations. The first, then-Secretary Zinke, resigned following a number of ethics-related findings that were referred to the Department of Justice, including lying to the Office of Inspector General, using personal email to conduct official business, and using taxpayer resources for his brewery. The second, then-Secretary Bernhardt, was involved in a bribery scandal involving a major land deal in Arizona.

What changes will you put in place at the Department to ensure that past ethical mistakes are not repeated?

Response: If confirmed, I will follow all applicable laws and regulations. Moreover, I have met with and will continue to consult with our designated agency ethics official on all matters related to conformance with applicable ethics guidance and law.

Question 4: Congress passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, which directed the Department of the Interior to administer billions of dollars while creating significant jobs and growth across the U.S.

Will you support the implementation of these laws and throughout implementation will you uphold the labor standards that were agreed to between the Department of the Interior and Department of Labor?

Response: If confirmed, I will implement the laws as enacted by Congress.

Questions from Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith

Question 1: Governor Burgum, the Chinese Communist Party has engaged in persistent, and overwhelming intelligence collection efforts across numerous targets in the United States, to include our critical infrastructure and strategic industries. The Department of Interior has a substantial fleet of Chinese-made drones that President Trump and Congress have taken steps to remove to reduce the ability of the CCP to use these devices as another vector for their intelligence gathering. As you are aware, North Dakota is on the precipice of creating a new program to replace the state's fleet of Chinese drones to help the state remain a leader in drone policy.

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

- 1) As Secretary, would you undertake a similar program at the Department to allow the Department to benefit from drones without risking US national security?

Response: The current drone program at the Department of the Interior was created, in part, by implementation of National Defense Authorization Act of 2024, which restricts the use of federal funds to purchase and operate drones from certain foreign entities. If confirmed, I will work to implement the law and examine any other drone policy in order to counter potential CCP and other malign foreign influences.

Question 2: Since being enacted in 1953, the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act has served as the cornerstone of a robust offshore oil and gas program that Congress recognized in the initial OCSLA legislation and declared, "... a vital national resource reserve held by the Federal Government for the public, which should be made available for expeditious and orderly development, subject to environmental safeguards, in a manner which is consistent with the maintenance of competition and other national needs."

- 2a) Do you believe that President Biden's extensive offshore acreage withdrawals are in agreement with Congressional intent for the development of US offshore oil and gas resources?**

Response: Our offshore oil and gas resources are a vital national resource which should be made available for expeditious development, subject to environmental safeguards, in order to meet national need. The Department of the Interior acts as a steward of these crucial oil and gas resources on behalf of the American people. Withdrawal of these vital resources limits access to these assets, drives innovation to other shores, and reduces our ability to meet the ongoing needs of the American people.

- 2b) Do you anticipate the Trump Administration taking action to rescind the Biden Administration's acreage withdrawals?**

Response: The President has made clear that responsible energy production is of the utmost importance to secure lower energy prices for the American people. The President has made public statements with regard to these withdrawals that impact our nation's energy resources.

Question 3: As you know, the Department of Interior has been given the authority of managing the exploration and development activities associated with offshore oil and gas production. However, we continue to see examples where agencies in departments other than Interior have undue influence over offshore activities. One current example of this dynamic is playing out, is the National Marine Fisheries Service development of a Biological Opinion for Gulf of Mexico Oil and Gas Activities. It is too convoluted to get into the specific details here, but in short, depending on the outcome of the NMFS analysis, the offshore oil and gas industry could face

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

debilitating restrictions to its operations based on very little conclusive evidence as to the presence of the Rice's whale in the central and western Gulf of Mexico.

3a) Under your leadership as Secretary will you commit to ensuring that agencies under your control will partner with NMFS on this effort to provide any needed information and work with the offshore oil and gas industry to provide NMFS with helpful information that will minimize operational disruptions while still providing adequate environmental protections to endangered species in the Gulf of Mexico?

3b) Do you believe there is a need to limit the ability of agencies to impose undue restrictions on industry based on spurious scientific claims?

Response: As stated previously, expeditious and orderly development of the Outer Continental Shelf is stated in the law and I will implement the laws as enacted by Congress. I also agree that coordination within the federal agencies is important and I commit to working with my counterparts.

Question 4: Financial Assurance

4) Do you believe that current lessees should be held accountable for all the activities and expectations that are required when a company owns an offshore oil and gas lease?

Response: I believe a healthy and vibrant offshore energy economy for ongoing oil and gas and production is the best outcome for our nation. I believe all operators on the Outer Continental Shelf have an obligation to operate as safely as possible and comply with all federal regulations and requirements under law.

Question 5: As Governor, you have been a vocal proponent of commonsense, streamlined carbon capture infrastructure development and deployment, including applying for primacy to transfer approval of Class VI wells to North Dakota. Captured carbon can be used for various uses, including enhanced oil recovery and other fuels, bioplastics and other polymers, concrete, and even carbonated beverages. Carbon capture has also been an opportunity for bipartisanship in Congress, including the 45Q tax credit as well as historic investments and regulatory support in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

5) As Secretary and National Energy Council Co-Chair, do you commit to working with Congress and industry to continue supporting the carbon capture industry and collaborating with the EPA to improve the state primacy application process and the overall permitting process for American energy projects?

Response: As I stated at the hearing, as Governor of North Dakota, carbon capture was an important aspect of our energy development strategy in the state. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the Department of the Interior and how they can further support this innovative method of sequestering carbon.

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Question 6: We have seen unprecedeted investment in energy development, but we continue to see these projects get caught up in years of delay. These delays have real impacts in not only dragging out the process but also significantly increasing the cost of construction, which risks chilling investment in the energy sector. I am particularly concerned with delays around emerging technologies. American companies are on the brink of demonstrating a working fusion energy machine and I am concerned that the commercialization of new technologies like fusion will be unnecessarily delayed.

- 6) Can you talk about the steps you would take to ensure emerging technologies can deploy rapidly and at scale?

Response: Government needs to move at the speed of technological innovation. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Department of the Interior is embracing new technologies to fulfill our statutory mandates just as American companies are also embracing new technologies to provide reliable, affordable energy.

Question 7: Governor, you are in the exciting position to be the Secretary of the Interior and chair of the new National Energy Council.

- 7a) Can you talk in more detail about how you will help ensure an “all of government” approach to helping support innovative energy technologies like fusion?

Response: As I stated in my response to a live hearing question from Senator Hoeven regarding the National Energy Council, the intent is for the Council to be a convening opportunity for agencies that have statutory authorities that affect our nation’s energy policies to coordinate. The goal, as stated by President Trump, is to reduce red tape and bureaucratic redundancy between agencies. Historically, presidents of both parties have convened similar interagency for a taskforce to serve a policy coordination function within the Executive Branch. Agencies will still need to act within their statutory authorities in the implementation of any policies in accordance with the law. If Congress directs actions be taken to accelerate fusion deployment using Department of the Interior authorities, I will implement it accordingly.

- 7b) Many of the key issues related to commercialization, deployment and supply chain for these technologies involve multiple agencies – how can your office help coordinate USG activities and cut through the bureaucracy to make sure this sector thrives?

Response: If confirmed, I will examine the Department’s current operations with an eye to improving efficiency, reducing red tape, and eliminating redundancy.

Question 8: One of the great successes we have had in recent years is in fostering public-private partnerships. These partnerships are especially critical for supporting the rapid deployment of energy production. One interesting approach we have seen in recent years is the development of ‘energy zones’ that speed up the permitting process in specified areas.

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

- 8) Can you talk about the opportunities you see for expanding on this concept to streamline energy deployment in pre-approved areas?

Response: While there are benefits to energy corridors and other tools that could help streamline permitting reviews, I want to ensure that the Department of the Interior is not picking winners and losers by setting aside areas for specific types of development. Technology moves fast, and the Department needs to be nimble enough to adapt to changing technologies. Any tool that encourages a resource neutral, all-of-the-above energy strategy and furthers American energy dominance will be considered by the Department.

Question 9: The 2018 Farm Bill created the Interagency Work Group (IWG), comprised of representatives from the Council on Environmental Quality, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Commerce, Department of the Interior, and Department of Agriculture. Congress charged the IWG with identifying and implementing improvements to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) review process for pesticides and engaging with stakeholders to help facilitate their input in these efforts. In 2022, the EPA published its ESA Workplan, outlining how it intended to meet its legal obligations for pesticide registration decisions under the Endangered Species Act. The IWG plays a vital role in ensuring that the strategies made under the EPA ESA workplan strike the right balance by incorporating perspectives from industry, growers, federal and state agencies, and other stakeholders while advancing practical, science-based solutions.

- 9) If confirmed, will you commit to working closely with your colleagues in the IWG to develop science-based policies that protect endangered species while recognizing the critical role pesticides play in ensuring agricultural productivity, protecting our nation's food supply, and supporting American farmers?

Response: As a former Governor from an agricultural state, I believe that a strong agricultural economy is crucial to achieving food security for our nation. I know this is an important issue for you and if confirmed, I will work with you to examine and review what options, if appropriate, are available with respect to this ongoing matter.

Question 10: Under the Biden Administration, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reissued the "blanket 4(d) rule" which disregards science and hinders habitat restoration efforts under the Endangered Species Act by establishing a one-size-fits-all approach to all listed species. Rather than motivating stakeholders to invest in a species' recovery by lifting the most stringent restrictions when its status improves, the blanket rule makes states and landowners indifferent to whether a species is endangered or threatened, improving, or declining. This penalizes and discourages states and landowners from maintaining or restoring wildlife habitat, prioritizing bureaucrats over wildlife and the general public.

- 10a) Do you believe changes to the Service's implementation of 4(d) rules could produce meaningful conservation results for wildlife?

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Response: I understand that many have encountered challenges with the regulatory implementation of the Endangered Species Act. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing this matter more thoroughly.

10b) Are there additional changes to 4(d) implementation you would like to see?

Response: I appreciate your input with regard to regulatory implementation of the Endangered Species Act and I look forward to working with you on this issue.

Question 11: Over the past four years the Biden Administration slowly began restricting the use of traditional ammunition on wildlife refuges.

11a) Are you concerned these restrictions create a barrier to entry for sportsmen seeking to recreate on public lands?

11b) If confirmed, how will you address this issue?

Response: If confirmed, Access for America's sportsmen and women to the Department of the Interior's lands will be of paramount importance to my mission. Affordability of ammunition is an important aspect of access to our national wildlife refuges and other Interior Department lands. If confirmed, I will work with you, the sportsmen and women communities and others to examine the banning of traditional ammunition on wildlife refuges as well as broader access issues.

Question 12: One of the most fundamental aspects of national security is food security. Without access to fertilizer, American agricultural yields will decline rapidly, which will have a direct impact on grocery prices for consumers. China and Russia control over 48% of the global phosphate fertilizer supply, while China, Belarus, and Russia together dominate 43% of the global potash supply.

Despite this significant control, the Biden Administration did not designate these fertilizers as critical minerals in 2022. The upcoming list is due this year from the Department of the Interior. In the current list, both phosphate and potash were excluded because they claimed they did not meet the criteria of being classified as "vulnerable to disruption," despite bipartisan and bicameral support for their inclusion. With what we saw in the fertilizer markets resulting after Russia invaded Ukraine and geopolitical tensions with China, these are clearly very vulnerable to disruption.

If confirmed as Secretary of Interior, you will have a pivotal role to ensure the United States is recognizing the essential role that potash and phosphate fertilizers play in our agricultural supply chain and our national security. The U.S. Geological Survey is required to consult with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on this list, which would have been valuable in understanding the full extent of these minerals' critical roles. However, the Biden Administration failed to do so.

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

12) If confirmed, will you commit to working with USDA on this year's critical mineral list and ensuring our farmers and the agriculture supply chain have a voice during this process?

Response: As the former Governor of an agricultural state, I understand the important role of fertilizers in achieving a secure domestic food supply. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing this matter more closely.

Question 13: Rodenticides are critical tools that farmers, ranchers, and others in the food industry use to protect public health and prevent food waste. Rodents spread disease, contaminate and destroy crops and food, and harm both indoor and outdoor infrastructure, causing property damage and electrical fire hazards. Many in the agriculture and food industries are concerned about the future of their access to rodenticides because of recent decisions made by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

13) As Secretary, how will you work with the regulated community to ensure that the consultation between the EPA and the USFWS required by the Endangered Species Act for eleven rodenticides includes the best available scientific and commercial data, and stakeholder input on the feasibility and effectiveness of measures to avoid, minimize, or offset the effects of rodenticides on listed species and their critical habitats?

Response: As the former Governor of an agriculture state, I appreciate the damage rodents and other pests can cause the farming community. I know this issue is important to you and if confirmed, I will look into this matter further as it relates to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Question 14: In January 2024, the Department of Interior (DOI), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and U.S. Department of Agriculture announced the establishment of the U.S. One Health Coordination Unit (U.S. OHCU), and last week the U.S. OHCU released the first-ever National One Health Framework to Address Zoonotic Diseases and Advance Public Health Preparedness in the United States, following congressional directives in the FY2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act and FY2021 House Appropriations Committee Report. This interagency collaboration is crucial for a robust, coordinated federal response to issues at the human-animal-environment interface—especially to high-consequence zoonotic diseases that originate in wildlife and can spread to people and livestock.

14a) If confirmed, will you commit to continue DOI's involvement with the U.S. OHCU?

14b) How can Congress best support DOI's efforts to contribute to the U.S. OHCU?

Response: I recognize the value of coordination between federal agencies, especially in the case of the health and safety of the public. If confirmed, I commit to learn about the

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

specific role the Department of the Interior plays in this program and I look forward to working with you on the issue.

Question 15: Federally-protected migratory birds often wreak havoc on livestock operations. Examples I frequently hear about from constituents include cormorants, egrets, and pelicans consuming millions of dollars' worth of farm-raised catfish from catfish ponds and spreading devastating bacterial and parasitic diseases to fish; and black vultures killing newborn calves. Additionally, many detections of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) in commercial egg layers—a disease currently decimating that industry—and in other livestock sectors are attributed to spread from wild birds.

It is hard to quantify the magnitude of losses and adverse effects that livestock operations experience due to intrusion from federally-protected bird populations. Under current regulations, farmers lack the ability to fully protect their animals, because they are limited in the number of birds they are allowed to kill with a permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Moreover, these protected bird populations do not actually seem to be struggling, but seem to be thriving to the point that they are disrupting farmers' abilities to produce protein for American consumption.

15) If confirmed, will you commit to closely examining DOI's policies regarding federally-protected migratory birds, and work to ease the regulatory burden currently on farmers trying to protect their livestock and aquaculture?

Response: If confirmed, I look forward to working with farmers and wildlife experts to examine the current policies in place regarding the depredation of migratory birds and work toward a solution to this ongoing issue.

Question 16: The Natchez National Historical Park, which is managed by the NPS, tells the stories of westward expansion, the Civil War period, and slavery through multiple federally owned and managed facilities. The State of Mississippi owns two historical sites closely related to those national park sites that can help fulfill Congress's original intent when establishing the federal park.

I introduced the "Grand Village of the Natchez Indians and Jefferson College Affiliated Areas Establishment Act" to ensure these two state owned sites can work in tandem with the Natchez National Historical Park. The Grand Village of the Natchez Indians interprets the story of the Natchez people, who were the original occupants of the area. The story of the Natchez Native Americans is essential to fulfilling purposes identified in §410oo. of Public Law 100-479 (1988), which established Natchez National Historical Park: "to preserve and interpret the sites and structures associated with all peoples of Natchez and its surrounding area from earliest inhabitants to the modern era, and including blacks, both slave and free."

Historic Jefferson College was Mississippi's birthplace, the intellectual center of the Old Natchez District, and served as a Freedmen's Bureau site after the Civil War. The site is important to the park's mission to "preserve and interpret the region's commercial and agricultural history, especially in relation to the Mississippi River and cotton," and to "preserve

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

and interpret the region's social, political, and economic development with particular emphasis on the pre- and post-Civil War eras."

The stories of both sites are uniquely integral to understanding the Natchez area and have strong connections with sites the National Park Service administer in Natchez.

16a) Will you commit to working with me on the "Grand Village of the Natchez Indians and Jefferson College Affiliated Areas Establishment Act" in this Congress?

Response: If confirmed, I will work with you to provide technical assistance on this bill.

16b) Will you commit to continuing to review the historical significance of Historic Jefferson College through all materials submitted by the Mississippi Department of Archives & History to reach a determination that it meets the criteria for designation as an affiliated area?

Response: If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about this important matter with the National Park Service and working with you further on this issue.

Question 17: The mission statement of the NPS was specifically changed in recent years to include the work that partners organizations do to support national parks. The current NPS mission statement reads, "The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The National Park Service cooperates with partners [emphasis added] to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world." In this context, partners aren't limited to Friends groups, but also include a wide variety of organizations, including other federal agencies, state agencies, municipal agencies, non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, corporations, and individuals.

The Vicksburg National Military Park has benefitted greatly from partnerships with the Friends of the Vicksburg National Military Park and Campaign as well as the Mississippi Department of Archives & History. These three organizations in Mississippi have entered into an agreement to work together to build and operate a new visitor center, museum, and archival research facility to support the Park. Through this partnership, the NPS will no longer be required to maintain a facility and will get the benefit of a modern interpretive center with significant financial contributions from the state government and private contributions. Without the funding, land, and technical expertise of these non-federal partners, NPS would not be able to adequately tell the important story of the Vicksburg campaign.

17a) Do you acknowledge and support the need for these types of partnerships to support the work of NPS?

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Response: I believe it is important for federal land managers, including the National Park Service, to be good neighbors to local communities, including working with various partners to enhance the visitor experience, where appropriate.

17b) Will you encourage senior leadership to support and not hinder these partnerships?

Response: If confirmed, I look forward to looking into this matter further.

Question 18: Not only does offshore oil and gas development bolster our energy security and provide good-paying jobs, but it also generates millions in revenue sharing for coastal states and communities. Currently, the Gulf states are treated differently than our inshore counterparts and get shortchanged with those revenues. The federal government splits the lease revenue from inland energy development 50/50 with the states and communities around that federal land. But offshore oil and gas in federal waters only returns about 37% to the coastal states. This funding can be used for storm mitigation, resiliency, and other environmental restoration projects.

18a) Do you think that is fundamentally unfair?

Response: Federal revenue sharing percentages are established by law. I believe that revenue sharing with states and local communities has been incredibly beneficial at the local level.

18b) At a time when we are all trying to figure out what to do about the skyrocketing prices for insurance and NFIP insolvency, shouldn't we be putting more money into storm protection and resiliency in our coastal communities?

Response: The role of the Department of the Interior is to implement federal revenue sharing laws as passed by Congress.

Question 19: We are proud of the contribution Mississippi makes to the country's energy security and to the economy through our tremendous oil and natural gas production in the Gulf of America, however since 2009 more than 30 corporate bankruptcies have occurred involving oil and gas operators that did not have sufficient bonding to cover their decommissioning liabilities. These bankruptcies often penalize unassociated Mississippi workers, subcontractors, predecessor companies, and increasingly the taxpayer who must safely decommission those bankrupt company's properties, so they do not become a hazard to our coast. This problem led to the Trump administration proposing new bonding regulations in 2020, finalized in 2024. Those final regulations do not allow a company operating offshore to go unbonded if there is a predecessor in the chain of title that can self-bond, because that would create an inappropriate incentive for bad actors to go bankrupt before properly decommissioning their liabilities. Section 5(b) of the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA) requires that compliance with the regulations issued under the law, such as those to decommission a company's properties at the end of the property's useful life, must be a condition of the issuance of any lease, or of any assignment or other transfer of any lease, under the provisions of the law.

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

19a) Do you agree that giving offshore operators the option to rely on a predecessor company to decommission a property that predecessor no longer owns or controls will diminish investment that should otherwise go towards President Trump's goal of greater oil and gas production in U.S. waters, workers, and companies that are following the law?

Response: President Trump has been clear that his goal is energy dominance and production and the good oil and gas jobs that occur for workers on the Outer Continental Shelf are an important piece of that goal. If confirmed, I will work to facilitate job creation, private investment, affordable and reliable energy production, and environmental conservation, consistent with legislation passed by Congress.

19b) Will you commit to ensuring that any reexamination or rewriting of the bonding regulations will not eliminate the legal requirement to decommission a company's offshore properties or simply allow them to go bankrupt if other uninvolved companies can be ordered to perform that decommissioning instead?

Response: As stated previously, I believe a healthy and vibrant offshore energy economy for ongoing oil and gas exploration and production is the best outcome for our nation. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing this matter more thoroughly to ensure that our nation ultimately continues to attract jobs and capital to drive long term offshore energy development in our country.

Questions from Senator Catherine Cortez Masto

Question 1: The seven Colorado River basin states are currently negotiating the terms for the River's Operating Guidelines that determine each state's future water supplies once the current Guidelines expire at the end of 2026. My colleagues and I have repeatedly stressed our concern that if consensus is not reached, then it will be left to years of litigation that will negatively impact many communities. It is imperative that the Interior Secretary bring the states together to prevent a crash in the system.

How will you ensure the Basin states reach a consensus before time runs out? If the seven states cannot come to agreement, what water management mechanisms and agreements can Interior take to stabilize reservoir water levels and provide greater predictability in water supply delivery?

It is incredibly important that you assemble a team of experts at the Bureau of Reclamation and as your Assistant Secretary for Water and Science who has a thorough understanding of Colorado River issues – AND that you make it clear to our communities about who is in charge of these negotiations. Do I have your commitment you'll do just that?

Response: The Colorado River is a critical water resource for the seven basin states. It provides drinking water to 40 million people, is home to 30 Tribes, irrigates 4 million acres of farmland, including 90% of the Nation's winter vegetables, generates enough hydropower for almost 800,000 households, fosters recreational opportunities and contains

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

fish and wildlife habitat. The Colorado River is governed by what's called the Law of the River, a collection of compacts, federal and state statutes, court decisions, a treaty with Mexico and agreements between the seven states and the federal government, Tribes and others. Each of these items allowed for the development and allocation of the River and is a result of a series of negotiations between various parties. The seven basin states are leaders in helping find a long-term agreement post-2026. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the states, Tribes and other parties to foster further dialogue to help find a durable resolution to this pressing matter.

Question 2: I have long supported both legislative and administrative efforts to curb speculative oil and gas leasing on public lands. In Nevada, speculators have nominated tens of millions of acres for leasing, with little results except for greater expense to the taxpayers. Between 2006 and 2020, the BLM leased 6.9 million acres of federal lands in Nevada, yet only 39 wells were drilled there during that period.

- Would you agree that speculative lease holders are a drain on agency resources and a wasteful management of land that could be managed for other purposes?
- Would you agree that some lands should be prioritized for other uses, such as hunting, fishing, grazing, mining, recreation and among others?
- Would you agree that the purpose of leasing low and no potential lands is NOT to promote America's energy independence, but rather to pad investment portfolios?
- Will you ensure that our public lands are managed to reduce speculative oil and gas leasing and other spurious activity?
- Would you uphold existing policies that prohibit leasing on public lands with no or low potential for development?

Response: Responsible energy development on our public lands are of great importance to me. If confirmed, I will ensure we follow all applicable laws and regulations when conducting lease sales and evaluating resource potential on our nation's public lands. The Federal Policy and Management Act directs the Secretary to manage our public lands under the principles of "multiple use and sustained yield" – with the aim of making the various resource values available to meet the present and future needs of the American people.

Question 3: What is your role and vision with this new National Energy Council?

- Will the council be in support of all forms of renewable energy deployment?
- How will you balance this role with your role as Interior Secretary?
- Can you commit to ensuring transparency in the workings of the Council, including who is serving on and advising the Council, any potential conflict of interests, and what topics are of focus to the group?

Response: As I stated in my response to a live hearing question from Senator Hoeven regarding the National Energy Council, the Council can serve a convening and collaboration function for relevant agencies that affect our nation's supply, production, and transportation of energy. The overarching goal, as stated by President Trump, is to reduce red tape and bureaucratic redundancy between agencies, so as to maximize

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

domestic energy resources for the benefit of the American people. Historically, presidents of both parties have convened similar interagency forums or taskforces to coordinate policymaking within the Executive Branch. Agencies will still need to act within their statutory authorities in the implementation of any policies in their purview, including requirements for transparency and to comport with all applicable ethics laws and regulations.

Question 4: In regard to President-Elect Trump's January 7th comments that "We are going to have a policy where no windmills are being built," there are companies in my state and across the West that have invested billions to create construction and maintenance jobs for wind projects on our public lands. Are these jobs and financial investments into our rural economies now at risk? Will you be pursuing a policy that no wind farms will be permitted or constructed during this second term?

Response: As I stated in my hearing, the significant growth of generative AI is driving an increasing need for electricity in the United States. Having an all of the above energy mix is an important means by which to address this looming energy crisis, however ensuring reliability of the grid requires baseload generation. The Department of the Interior acts as steward of our nation's public lands, and ensures that the responsible development of all of these energy resources can occur in order to meet our national need. If confirmed, I will adhere to all laws and regulations applicable to this generation, including policy directives issued by the President.

Question 5: I have been seeking an update to Nevada's terribly outdated Resource Management Plans (RMPs) to better account for changing public land management needs and to better identify lands to help communities address the housing crisis.

Now, more than ever, Nevada needs a cohesive and holistic state-wide RMP that is informed by robust constituent engagement and input so that all stakeholders understand how their livelihoods and access to Nevada's public lands are impacted.

Will you prioritize completing a state-wide RMP that includes robust engagement with State, local, and Tribal governments?

Response: Housing is one of many critically important issues facing western states, and I am eager to review the authorities of the Department of the Interior and work together with you and representatives from across the West to help alleviate the pressures of rising housing costs.

If confirmed, I will direct the BLM to continually review existing RMPs, including Nevada's, to ensure that these plans are responsive to the needs of states and local communities, as well as the nation. Certainly, any amendments to RMPs will be developed with several opportunities for robust public engagement and governor's consistency reviews, as required by the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Question 6: In 2022, a Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals decision related to the Rosemont Copper project in Arizona upended nearly a half-century of mining precedent and created significant regulatory uncertainty for ancillary-use activities on mining operations.

Both the House and Senate have advanced different pieces of bipartisan legislation in the last congress to address the court's decision and provide certainty to existing and future mining operations on federal lands.

Do you support providing regulatory certainty to the mining industry and addressing the 2022 court decision that will enable the Interior Department to be a proactive part of the domestic mineral supply chain?

Response: Ensuring regulatory certainty and supporting a domestic mineral supply chain is essential for U.S. economic, energy, and national security. This is something that I sought to provide as the governor of North Dakota, and if confirmed, I will continue to prioritize as Secretary of the Interior.

Question 7: The United States is overly-dependent on foreign nations, like China, for critical minerals essential to our defense, transportation, aerospace, energy, and manufacturing sectors. We must ensure the nation's economy and national security are no longer reliant on adversarial nations for the supply and processing of these strategic materials – especially when the United States is rich with deposits of critical and rare earth minerals.

And yet, the process to permit and develop new mines on federal lands is incredibly complex and lengthy. In Nevada, it can take nearly 10 years to bring a new mine online.

What will you do to ensure that the permitting process for these projects is prioritized and visible at the highest levels of the Department, reflecting the vital national security and economic interests at play?

Response: I agree that the United States needs to develop our vast reserves of critical minerals in order to free our country from its reliance on China and other adversaries. In order to effectively develop these resources, we must establish a federal permitting framework that adheres to predictable timelines and establishes clear standards for approval.

Question 8: The BLM has been underfunded for decades, and that has led to a lack of staffing and resources that kneecaps the agency from fulfilling its multiple-use mandate in servicing all land users, including ranchers, outdoor recreationists and energy developers. I hear from communities from across my state there's not enough staff for law enforcement, to complete appraisals, to issue permits, or to perform regular day-to-day operations in the field.

Do you intend to hire more BLM staff? Will you seek increased funding from Congress to ensure the agency can better serve ranchers, hunters, outdoor recreation businesses, and the American people?

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Response: The Federal Policy and Management Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to manage our public lands under the principles of “multiple use and sustained yield” – with the aim of making the various resource values available to meet the present and future needs of the American people. As a former Governor who has had to staff up many offices to ensure the ongoing work of the state continues efficiently, I understand the difficulties in trying to hire and maintain staff to keep operations moving forward. If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) challenges with regard to hiring staff to ensure that all users receive a timely decision or answer from the BLM. I look forward to learning more about the feedback of your constituents and the unique needs you are encountering with the BLM in your state.

Question 9: Next-generation geothermal energy technologies are available today to provide clean and reliable electricity across the United States. These projects create jobs in rural communities, including those in my home state of Nevada. However, the current process of approving geothermal development makes it difficult to plan, finance, and build projects.

- Would you agree to increase DOI and BLM staff resources with drilling expertise to prioritize the leasing and permitting of next-generation geothermal energy?
- How do you plan to improve the existing regulations for leasing and permitting of next-generation geothermal energy development?

Response: As I stated earlier, the forthcoming energy crisis in our country requires our attention. If confirmed, I will work to ensure all of the appropriate energy uses on federal lands, including geothermal, benefit from common sense initiatives that bring certainty and greater alacrity to the energy leasing and permitting process.

Question 10: The Fallon Range Training Complex (FRTC) expansion rests upon a responsible, bipartisan, and Nevada-generated solution to a host of competing priorities.

And as such, the law which permits the expansion, also tasks the Department of the Interior with fulfilling a substantial number of commitments.

These commitments range from items like completing a major land exchange between DOI and local governments, making public purpose conveyances to local governments, to tribal access agreements, and resolution of what is commonly known as checkerboard land (i.e. where federal lands and private lands are sited next to each other in alternating square mile segments).

- Can you commit that you will dedicate more funding towards implementation of the law, including adding staff in Nevada which are responsible for specifically for implementing this law?
- Will you commit that any and all planning, NEPA documentation, and realty actions needed to complete are done as quickly as possible, especially since this action was directed by Congress.
- Will you commit to meeting with affected local governments in Nevada to discuss their perspective on how to best meet the commitments of this law?

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Response: If confirmed, I will work to fully implement all laws that Congress has enacted regarding the Fallon Range Training Complex that are applicable to the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Question 11: Several Tribes in Nevada have had the rug pulled out from under them by BIA regarding funding for criminal detention services. I've been working with BIA to rectify this critical public safety crisis.

Do you commit to ensuring these Tribes receive adequate funding, support, and communication in order to prevent criminals from being released on the streets?

Response: In my role as former Governor, working in partnership with the Tribes in North Dakota was important to me. I know that the Bureau of Indian Affairs has publicly announced steps to remedy the lack of law enforcement personnel in Indian country. If confirmed, I will be sure to get a better understanding of these challenges and develop solutions that prioritize public safety.

Question 12: Do you have any conflicts of interest that would prevent you from fulfilling your duties as Secretary of the Interior? If so, how do you plan to divest and resolve these conflicts?

Response: No. We worked diligently with the OGE to reach an agreement that I will follow.

Questions from Senator John W. Hickenlooper

Question 1: Coordination between federal agencies is critical for effectively managing public lands and supporting outdoor recreation. How do you plan to ensure the continued success of the Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation (FICOR), and how will you ensure effective collaboration across agencies to support recreational access and opportunities?

Response: As a lifelong hunter who also believes that getting outdoors is essential for your own personal health, I look forward, if confirmed, to supporting implementation of the Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation through the many relevant bureaus at the Department of the Interior that advance recreational opportunities and innovations for the American people.

Question 2: As you know, the Bureau of Land Management is responsible for managing multiple uses of 245 million acres of public lands. These lands hold significant value for a variety of productive uses, from grazing to recreation, from mining to ecosystem resilience, and from renewable energy to wildlife habitat. Do you support keeping land health and conservation on equal footing with other uses as part of BLM's multiple-use mission?

Response: I believe that these various multiple uses can generally coexist on federal lands. While there are certainly some specific instances in which different uses can be in conflict,

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

it is my commitment to carry out the statutory directive of multiple use in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

Question 3: The future of the Colorado River and the Southwest rests on the successful negotiation of guidelines for managing the river in 2026 and beyond. Over the past several years, Tribal engagement on water issues has become increasingly recognized as important for successful and equitable outcomes in the Colorado River Basin. Will you continue to engage with Tribes in Colorado and beyond on their water issues?

Response: The Colorado River is a critical water resource for the seven basin states. It provides drinking water to 40 million people, is home to 30 Tribes, irrigates 4 million acres of farmland, including 90% of the Nation's winter vegetables, generates enough hydropower for almost 800,000 households, fosters recreational opportunities and contains fish and wildlife habitat. The Colorado River is governed by what's called the Law of the River, a collection of compacts, federal and state statutes, court decisions, a treaty with Mexico and agreements between the seven states and the federal government, Tribes and others. Each of these items allowed for the development and allocation of the River and is a result of a series of negotiations between various parties. The seven basin states are leaders in helping find a long-term agreement post-2026. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the states, Tribes and other parties to foster further dialogue to help find a durable resolution to this pressing matter.

Question 4: Under the *Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act*, Tribes can contract with the Department of the Interior to operate federal programs serving their members. We have heard directly from Colorado Tribes that the Bureau of Indian Affairs is simply not paying Tribes under these contracts. The Southern Ute Indian Tribe in Colorado is owed over \$7 million for work performed under these contracts dating back to FY 2022. The agency attributes this backlog to understaffing. For the federal government not to pay Tribes for years for the work they perform has a significant impact on Indian Country. How will you work with me to address the issue?

Response: The Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act (ISDEAA) provides Tribes the opportunity to assume programs or services provided by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Assumption of a program or service is done through a model contract set in the ISDEAA. In general, the policy underlying the ISDEAA is to provide the contracting Tribe with the funding that the BIA would otherwise use to provide a program or service. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and the BIA to better understand and resolve, if appropriate, this particular matter.

Question 5: We know our outdated electric grid is a threat to the reliability of our energy system, driving up costs for consumers and risking blackouts. The dismal state of our grid is also putting us more at risk of extreme wildfires. The devastating and deadly 2021 Marshall Fire in Boulder County Colorado was partially ignited by a combination of high winds and hot aluminum particles discharged from power lines. In your role as both Secretary of the Interior

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

and the nation's "energy czar", how will you ensure we integrate wildfire resilience into our land management priorities and our pressing need to update our electric grid?

Response: As we discussed in the hearing, we have unfortunately witnessed in Los Angeles that wildfire can strike quickly and in devastating fashion. It is vitally important that all land management agencies at the Department of the Interior pursue aggressive fuels management activities to reduce fuel loads and limit the spread of disease. Providing clear permitting guidelines, including categorical exclusions for vegetation management under the National Environmental Policy Act, can also speed up these important risk reduction actions. If confirmed, I will also seek to ensure that our wildland fire teams are fully supported and prepared to respond quickly to fires.

Question 6: In the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Congress directed DOI to study permit times for hardrock mines on public lands and recommend ways to improve efficiency and environmental outcomes. DOI determined the average and median time spent permitting public lands mines is 3 years, commensurate with allied mining nations. DOI also recommended early and ongoing outreach with directly impacted communities. Do you agree that listening, respecting, and incorporating community input early in mine exploration and plans can both create better environmental outcomes and avoid or mitigate potential permitting delays?

Response: Proactive and meaningful communication with stakeholders and Tribal communities is vital to any project on federal lands, including mining activities. Early conversations build relationships that are mutually beneficial and invite input into the development that can result in refinements and improvements to the overall project that enhance environmental outcomes. If confirmed, I intend to follow all relevant laws and regulations related to permitting activities for energy and mineral development, which often include rigorous public engagement, including through public comment.

Question 7: As Energy Czar, you will play a key role coordinating energy and critical minerals policy across the federal government. Last Congress, I introduced the National Critical Minerals Council Act with Senator Tillis to develop and implement a national critical mineral strategy and coordinate federal investments and research. Considering the vital role critical minerals play in U.S. energy, advanced technologies, and national defense, what steps will you take to better coordinate the development, funding, and implementation of a strategy to responsibly secure essential critical mineral resources both at home and abroad?

Response: According to the 2024 Mineral Commodity Summary published by the United States Geological Survey, in 2023, imports made up more than one-half of the U.S. consumption for 49 nonfuel mineral commodities. The United States was 100% net import reliant for 15 of those minerals and China and Canada were the leading foreign import sources. The USGS plays an important role in assisting our nation identify location of these important resources, including areas where such important resources can be found in commercial quantities on public lands. In such areas where minerals may be found on federal lands, it is very likely that the commercial development of a locatable mineral will be applicable to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, the Mining Law of

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

1872, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, the Endangered Species Act of 1973, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Clean Water Act of 1972, and the Clean Air Act of 1970, to name just a few. Navigating the regulatory structures of these statutory obligations in these many different agencies concurrently is understandably daunting. If confirmed, I will work hard to find meaningful yet lawful efficiencies to reduce permitting delays, increase regulatory certainty, and promote access to our nation's critical mineral resources.

Question 8: How can the Department of Interior expand responsible development of clean energy technologies like solar, wind, and geothermal on public lands through intentional design of permitting and leasing processes and staffing and technology use?

Response: The Department of the Interior can expand the responsible development of all energy technologies on federal land by reforming outdated permitting processes to provide better response times and create more durable outcomes on permitting decisions.

Question 9: Next-generation geothermal energy is available today to provide 24/7 clean and reliable electricity over a diverse range of geographies in the United States, creating jobs in rural communities and enhancing American energy security. As Secretary of Interior, how do you plan to improve the existing regulations for leasing and permitting process for next-generation geothermal energy development?

Response: The Department of the Interior can expand the responsible development of all energy technologies on federal land by reforming outdated permitting processes to provide better response times and create more predictable outcomes. This includes geothermal energy, which is an important part of our nation's energy mix.

Question 10: Governor Burgum, as energy czar you will play a key role in securing our critical mineral supply chains. However, there are reports that the incoming Trump Administration is considering new tariffs on all critical minerals, despite the U.S. lacking a domestic supply for many of them. Imposing tariffs without a clear strategy to secure supply chains amounts to little more than a tax on Americans. What is your plan to collaborate with allies to strengthen critical mineral supply chains and expand domestic processing capabilities?

Response: I agree that domestic production and access to allies' fairly traded critical minerals are essential to our national and economic security. If confirmed, I will review the Department of the Interior's authorities to accelerate critical mineral production while protecting the environment, and, where appropriate, work with other federal agencies on ensuring robust and fair trade of these commodities with our allies.

Questions from Senator Alex Padilla

Question 1: As we work towards developing more offshore wind in California, it is important that we meaningfully work with California Tribes to do so. If confirmed, how will you work with

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

BOEM to strengthen tribal engagement and consultation, and co-management in offshore wind projects like those in Morro Bay and Humboldt?

Response: As a Governor, tribal engagement was critically important to me. I worked extensively with Tribes, listened and had meaningful dialogue. If confirmed, I will continue this commitment and ensure that Tribes have an opportunity to provide input into this process.

Question 2: The federal Central Valley Project and the State of California's State Water Project is a joint federal-state water operation that moves water to cities, farmers, and for wildlife. It is a very complex system that requires tremendous cooperation between the Interior Department and California. If confirmed, do you commit that you will work in cooperation with California on water management, including on the biological opinions that govern these projects, and not against the state? How do you plan to bring people together and collaborate across disparate interests to improve water management in California?

Response: The Central Valley Project (CVP) and the State Water Project (SWP) form an integrated water supply project that captures and delivers water to agricultural operations, municipal and industrial water users and the environment. Lawsuits, subsequent and successive Biological Opinions and federal laws such as Subtitle J of the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act, along with other laws such as the Central Valley Project Improvement Act, have governed recent CVP/SWP operations. While this issue is very complex and ongoing, if confirmed, I will work with interested parties to help find affordable and reliable solutions to help bring about water supply improvements for diverse water uses.

Question 3: Providing equitable outdoor access to all creates healthier people and communities. How do you prioritize competing access, recreation, preservation, and conservation needs of the diverse land portfolio under the Department of Interior? How important is it to prioritize outdoor access and recreation nationwide, including in urban and low-income areas?

Response: I am committed to ensuring increased public access to America's public lands.

Question 4: The Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program is a critical and bipartisan program that supports park projects in neighborhoods where residents currently have few opportunities to recreate and experience nature. If confirmed, how will you prioritize funding for this program and guarantee that it continues to invest nationwide in transformational projects?

Response: Programs like the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program were created by Congress to ensure that some funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund Stateside Program are used for grants to low-income communities that would not otherwise have access to parks and other outdoor recreation facilities. As I stated during my hearing, I believe that outdoor recreation is good for the economy and for the health of all Americans. If confirmed, I will work with eligible communities to understand their needs and how this program may meet those needs.

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Question 5: While Congress has recently worked to address pay parity issues for the federal firefighting workforce, this issue doesn't just affect firefighters. Unfortunately, similar challenges exist across a range of positions at the Department of the Interior, which are contributing to significant vacancies and affecting the federal government's ability to approve project permits, appropriately steward our federal public lands and waters, and carry out the Department's mission. If confirmed, will you commit to working with this committee on pay parity and staffing challenges?

Response: **The issue of pay parity for the federal firefighting workforce is especially relevant right now as we witness the tragedy that Los Angeles is experiencing. If confirmed, I will make it a priority to better understand this complex problem that impacts a range of positions and keep my commitment to be responsive on issues of concern to the Congress.**

Question 6: The lack of affordable housing and the high cost of living similarly affect staff recruitment and retention at federal agencies. If confirmed, will you commit to dedicating resources and prioritizing staff time to improving the housing inventory, for staff at the National Park Service and other Interior agencies?

Response: **One of the great challenges that we are facing as a nation right now is housing availability and affordability. This has a direct effect on the housing of our federal workforce. If confirmed, I will work with Congress and with local communities to find solutions to the housing shortage.**

Question 7: Secretary's Order 3362, signed by former Interior Secretary Zinke under the Trump Administration, appropriately prioritized migration corridor management and conservation. This effort has enhanced critical wildlife habitat connectivity and supported states' conservation efforts. If confirmed, will you continue implementing this Secretarial Order? Do you believe it would benefit the Department for Congress to codify the original Secretarial Order to ensure the Administration has the support and resources needed to maximize connectivity efforts?

Response: **The protection and conservation of migration corridors can be an important tool as part of an overall wildlife conservation strategy. It is important to work with states as the primary managers of wildlife resources to develop tailored approaches to each state's unique challenges, including the conservation of wildlife corridors.**

Question 8: Conservation easements provide mutual benefit for landowners, sportsmen, and the wildlife that depend on these landscapes. Easements are also an important tool for keeping working lands intact. Do you support the continued use of conservation easements?

Response: **Voluntary conservation easements are often used as an alternative to fee acquisition to help an agency achieve a conservation value while allowing the land to remain in private ownership. Private landowners have played a key role in protecting and promoting habitat conservation throughout the nation. As a life-long sportsman, I know**

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

firsthand the importance of conserving habitat to support healthy wildlife populations and I look forward to working with you on this important issue, if confirmed.

Question 9: Many iconic national parks suffer from overcrowding and the number of visitors to America's public lands has significantly increased in recent years, leading to vehicle congestion, limited parking, and degradation of natural resources. Online reservation systems are an important tool for ensuring visitors have the space to explore the outdoors. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring online reservation systems provide equal access to federal lands for all Americans and have transparent fee structures?

Response: I believe that it is important to use technology to ensure the most effective management of our Nation's parks and other public lands. If confirmed, I will seek to fully understand the current reservation systems and work to make improvements, where needed.

Question 10: The Department of the Interior plays a central role in how the U.S. stewards its public lands and stays resilient as a nation from threats both foreign and domestic. If confirmed, how would the Department of Interior safeguard and leverage its vast natural resources in order to bolster America's biotechnology innovation and resources, including valuable data?

Response: Many of the statutes providing direction to the Secretary of the Interior with regard to developing resources on our nation's federal lands include policy mandates stating the importance of meeting our "national need." The federal lands and resources under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior belong to the American people, and should be harnessed to provide for the growing needs of our people. Increasing data usage and storage necessarily requires increased power resources, which in turn plays a role in our nation's forthcoming energy crisis. If confirmed, I would follow the law as it pertains to these critically important issues and ensure that we leverage our energy resources responsibly in order to meet our growing electricity needs.

Question 11: It has never been more important to invest in America's public lands and waters to strengthen the nation's infrastructure and competitiveness, create good-paying jobs, maintain resilient ecosystems, and teach Americans about their country. If confirmed as the Secretary of the Interior, how will you work to document and understand the biodiversity on U.S. public lands, allowing the American people to better conserve these ecosystems and benefit from the resulting findings?

Response: The Endangered Species Act is our Nation's law designed to ensure for the long-term conservation of our fish and wildlife species. If confirmed, I will obey all federal laws and regulations, including the Endangered Species Act, which ensures thoughtful consideration of the long-term conservation goals for many species.

Question 12: The President-elect has weaponized the devastation that Californians are currently facing to falsely blame California's water policies for some of the municipal fire hydrant issues we have seen. Southern California actually has record water storage, and any water expert knows

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

this wasn't an actual water supply issue as suggested by the incoming president. Are you committed to staying above the fray and collaborating closely with me and state and local officials to advance commonsense water policy and rebuild following these devastating fires?

Response: As I stated in my hearing, we are all saddened to see the devastation caused by the wildfires in Los Angeles and we must work together to provide land agencies with all the tools they need to aggressively manage wildfire danger. I look forward to working with you and other policymakers on innovative solutions for wildfire.

Question 13: As Senator, I have worked closely with several Tribal governments over the last four years to successfully advance proposals to protect sacred tribal land and support co-stewardship agreements between the Department of the Interior and Tribal governments. Recent uses of the Antiquities Act in California were supported by California's federal delegation, Governor Newsom, and local and tribal leaders. For example, we worked with the Yocha Dehe tribe to modestly expand the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument by about 13,000 acres to protect their sacred sites, and I was proud to join them in California as they signed co-stewardship agreements with Interior. The recently established Chuckwalla National Monument has overwhelming support from federal, state, local, and tribal officials, and was crafted with the direct input from the energy industry and ultimately earned their support. Governor Burgum, are you committed to respecting and expanding co-stewardship opportunities between the federal government and Tribes, and working with me and California Tribes to respect and protect Tribally-led National Monuments?

Response: I look forward to working with Tribes and believe tribal input is incredibly important. Ultimately, the Antiquities Act of 1906 grants the President the authority to designate or change monument boundaries. Should a decision be made by the President related to a national monument, I will follow all applicable laws.

Question 14: The Colorado River, known as the "lifeline" of the Southwest, provides drinking water to over 40 million people – half of whom live in California, irrigates over 5 million acres of agricultural land, and provides habitat for a diversity of species. If confirmed, one of your most important roles will be to work with the Colorado River Basin States and Tribes over future management of the River, including the post-2026 operations. Governor Burgum, if confirmed, can you commit to using your role as Secretary to encourage the Colorado River Basin states and tribes to reach a 7-state consensus on the post-2026 river operations? How do you plan to encourage the consensus necessary to achieve a lasting agreement?

Response: The Colorado River is a critical water resource for the seven basin states. It provides drinking water to 40 million people, is home to 30 Tribes, irrigates 4 million acres of farmland, including 90% of the Nation's winter vegetables, generates enough hydropower for almost 800,000 households, fosters recreational opportunities and contains fish and wildlife habitat. The Colorado River is governed by what's called the Law of the River, a collection of compacts, federal and state statutes, court decisions, a treaty with Mexico and agreements between the seven states and the federal government, Tribes and others. Each of these items allowed for the development and allocation of the River and is a

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

result of a series of negotiations between various parties. The seven basin states are leaders in helping find a long-term agreement post-2026. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the states, Tribes and other parties to foster further dialogue to help find a durable resolution to this pressing matter.

Question 15: California is proudly home to 109 federally recognized Tribes, so the Department plays a critical role in working with California Tribes on a host of issues. Governor Burgum, how do you view the relationship between the federal government and Tribes, and if confirmed, will you commit to respecting tribal sovereignty and engaging in genuine consultation with Tribes?

Response: As stated in longstanding Supreme Court decisions, and Federal laws and policies, the Tribes enjoy a government-to-government relationship. The Secretary of the Interior has a significant role in meeting the Federal government's trust responsibility to the Tribes. As part of that government-to-government relationship and trust responsibility, genuine consultation with the Tribes is critical. If confirmed, I commit to respecting Tribal sovereignty and will engage in consultation with the Tribes.

Question 16: The California Conservation Corps provides young adults with paid opportunities to work on environmental conservation, natural resource management, and disaster response projects, equipping them with hands-on experience, education, and job training. Widely regarded as a successful model, the program offers pathways to careers in environmental and public service sectors while addressing critical challenges facing the state. Mr. Burgum, if confirmed, how will Interior work with and build on programs like the California Conservation Corps to provide the next generation with opportunities to develop valuable skills and create job opportunities?

Response: As a former Governor, I value state programs that provide experience, education, and job training to young people. If confirmed, I will look for opportunities to work with partners from states and other non-federal organizations in the stewardship of our public lands.

Question 17: Increasing water scarcity throughout the West demands widespread changes to secure our water supply. The Colorado River Basin's water shortage, the Great Salt Lake's decline to record low levels, and California's subsidence due to groundwater overdraft in the Central Valley are just a few of the many examples of long-term challenges demanding changes in our water use. In California, it is estimated that at least 750,000 to 1 million acres of farmland will need to come out of development due to water scarcity. If this land transition is not proactively managed, it could result in increased dust, pests and weeds, and widespread economic impacts in our communities. In response, the California State Legislature established the Multibenefit Land Repurposing Program to help regions repurpose agricultural land while providing community health, economic well-being, water supply, habitat, renewable energy, and climate benefits. Repurposing certain agricultural lands can help minimize the economic impacts of droughts and create new public benefits while ensuring our most productive agricultural lands

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

remain productive. Will you commit to working with me to advance solutions to both increase our water supply while also reducing water demand via voluntary land repurposing?

Response: The Colorado River is a critical water resource for the seven basin states. It provides drinking water to 40 million people, is home to 30 Tribes, irrigates 4 million acres of farmland, including 90% of the Nation's winter vegetables, generates enough hydropower for almost 800,000 households, fosters recreational opportunities and contains fish and wildlife habitat. The Colorado River is governed by what's called the Law of the River, a collection of compacts, federal and state statutes, court decisions, a treaty with Mexico and agreements between the seven states and the federal government, Tribes and others. Each of these items allowed for the development and allocation of the River and is a result of a series of negotiations between various parties. The seven basin states are leaders in helping find a long-term agreement post-2026. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the states, Tribes and other parties to foster further dialogue to help find a durable resolution to this pressing matter.

Questions from Senator Maria Cantwell

Question 1: Outdoor Recreation

Mr. Burgum, nearly 20% of land in the United States is managed by the Department of Interior and a significant amount is used for outdoor recreation, which is a major economic driver, especially in Washington state. Outdoor recreation generates \$1.2 trillion in economic output every year and accounts for 5 million jobs.

- Will you support efforts to protect more public lands and waters through designations such as wild and scenic designations -- that will support the outdoor recreation economy and create jobs in gateway communities?

Response: If confirmed, I will work with local communities to understand how decisions I make in my role as Secretary of the Interior can support their local economies, including outdoor recreation.

Question 2: Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Mr. Burgum, thank you for the productive exchange at today's hearing. I really appreciated your comments on the importance of outdoor recreation to our economy and also to the health of both people and wildlife. These priorities are absolutely critical to us in Washington State, which is why I asked for your support for the LWCF. You may recall that permanent, dedicated funding for LWCF was the original energy/conservation offset established in 1965 and the leading piece of the Great American Outdoors Act, the signature conservation achievement of President-Elect Trump's first term that I worked on with many of my Republican colleagues for many years.

Passage of that legislation has had huge impact in Washington, protecting key outdoor recreation access at our National Parks such as the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, North Cascades National Park, and San Juan Islands National Historic Park and National Monument to fuel our outdoor recreation economy. Frankly, it has grown recreation access in every zip code across the country. LWCF has also made huge investments in sportsmen's access, wildlife

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

habitat and migration corridors—in every state in America. You've probably seen that yourself in the Dakota Grasslands protecting our nation's duck factory, as well as countless state parks, river and lake access points that allow everyone to participate in these traditions.

The Great American Outdoors Act ensured that historic promise of LWCF's funding—which comes from the royalties paid into the U.S. Treasury from oil and gas drilling in the Outer Continental Shelf, not from taxpayer dollars—is allocated to priorities at the state and local level as well as to protecting our National Parks, Wildlife Refuge and other public lands in a locally-driven, bottom-up process according to where there is most need, urgency, and opportunity to work with willing landowners to protect the best of this country. It is highly competitive and projects always garner broad support in order to succeed.

- Do you agree that this highly successful program has a long track record of empowering communities, creating more access for hunting, fishing, and recreation, and driving successful conservation outcomes?

Response: Yes. The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established by Congress in 1964 to assist in preserving, developing, and assuring accessibility to outdoor recreation resources and to strengthen the health and vitality of our citizens through greater recreational access. Today, the LWCF is primarily funded from receipts from offshore oil and natural gas development on the federal OCS and funds have been used, especially at the state level, to acquire and conserve important lands that promote recreational use, including hunting and fishing—including many youth baseball fields, campgrounds, playground, and other state park upgrades in my home state of North Dakota.

- How do you view LWCF as a tool to maximize recreation and sportsmen opportunities and improve federal land management?

Response: Land and Water Conservation Fund programs, including the State Program, can be utilized to ensure access to federal lands and offer recreation options.

- Will you commit to continuing to support full use of the annual \$900 million of mandatory spending for the LWCF?

Response: If confirmed, I will implement the laws as enacted by Congress.

Question 3: Great American Outdoors Act

Mr. Burgum, under the first Trump administration, Congress passed the largest investment in public lands in US history—the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA). Unfortunately, critical conservation funding authorized through GAOA expires at the conclusion of fiscal year 2025. GAOA is a critical tool to address the decades-old maintenance backlog on public lands.

- Do I have your commitment to work with interested Energy and Natural Resources Committee members to push for reauthorization of the GAOA before it expires?

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Draft Response: The Great American Outdoors Act, which President Trump signed into law during his first term, was a great step forward for our national parks and other Department of the Interior agencies. If confirmed, I will work to address the deferred maintenance backlog.

Question 4: Tribal Trust and Treaty Obligation

Mr. Burgum, you come from a state, like the State of Washington, where some tribal nations have treaty rights. In Washington State our tribal nations' treaty hunting and fishing rights are sacrosanct. Please provide separate answers for each of the following questions:

- Do you commit to upholding the United States' treaty responsibilities to tribal nations?

Response: If confirmed, I commit to upholding the United States treaty responsibilities to Tribes, consistent with the legal authorities granted to the Secretary of the Interior.

- What are your plans to ensure that the United States lives up to its trust responsibilities to tribal nations?

Response: The trust responsibilities of the Department of the Interior for specific Tribes and for all Tribes are set forth in numerous treaties, statutes, Federal court decisions, regulations and policies that span several hundred years. What is often overlooked is that the Tribes are often in the best position to explain how their needs can be met. If confirmed, I commit to engaging with Tribal leaders, including through formal and informal consultation, to work with them on the best way to meet the trust responsibilities of the Department consistent with applicable laws, treaties, and court decisions.

- If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to ensure that Tribal consultation is a meaningful and enforceable process, rather than a box checking formality?

Response: I believe that actual consultation is the most effective way for the Department of the Interior to effectively meet its trust responsibilities to Tribes.

- If confirmed, will you commit to working with Tribes on a government-to-government basis, engaging in meaningful Tribal consultation on federal policies that impact them, and honoring Tribal sovereignty?

Response: I believe that actual consultation is the most effective way for the Department of the Interior to effectively meet its trust responsibilities to Tribes.

- In the 118th Congress, several bills were introduced that would ratify tribal water rights settlements. What would be your criteria for evaluating and making recommendations to the Administration on proposed tribal water rights settlements?

Response: Management of water resources among all constituent parties is a major responsibility for the Department of the Interior. If confirmed, I will commit that the Departments bureaus and offices which have duties and responsibilities implementing and managing water resources under the administrative jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior will make their best efforts to work with all constituent parties in water settlement

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

negotiations. I will further commit that the Department of the Interior will work to fulfill its statutory and trust responsibilities in implementing and managing Tribal water settlements.

- Will you commit to improving the implementation and enforcement of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and the protection of Tribal cultural heritage from looting, destruction, trafficking, and exploitation pursuant to federal law?

Response: The protection of Tribal graves and cultural heritage is a solemn responsibility of the Department of the Interior and the Department of Justice (DOJ). If confirmed, I commit to working closely with the Attorney General to assist the DOJ in their prosecution of criminal violations of the NAGPRA.

- In 2021, the Department launched the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative. Since then, the Department has held listening sessions across the country and produced two volumes of findings. If confirmed, will you commit to working with Tribes and advocates to continuing this work, including advocating for additional funding in the President's budget and supporting federal legislation?

Response: I know the history of Federal Indian Board Schools is incredibly painful for many, and that the former Secretary worked hard to shed light on this important issue. While many of the recommendations from the investigative report associated with this initiative are not within the administrative jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior, I look forward to reviewing those recommendations and if confirmed, I will work with you on this important matter.

Question 5: Tribal Public Safety

Mr. Burgum, public safety remains one of the most pressing issues facing Tribes throughout the country, the needs range from the need for more officers, detention, and judges.

- Can you commit that you will work with the Administration to address this need in the President's Budget and by removing red tape facing our Tribal law enforcement agencies?
- Do you support the Tribal Law Enforcement Parity Act that will allow Tribes to recruit and retain more Tribal law enforcement officers?
- If confirmed, what steps would you take to improve public safety on Tribal lands, particularly as it relates to the Department of the Interior's collaboration with the Department of Justice?
- If confirmed, what specific steps will you take to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples, particularly as it concerns improve interagency coordination on public safety and those agencies' investigative capacity to ensure Tribal and BIA law enforcement have the resources and support they need?

Response: As I have stated before, in my role as former Governor, working in partnership with the Tribes in North Dakota was critically important to me. I know that the Bureau of Indian Affairs has publicly announced steps to remedy the lack of law enforcement

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

personnel in Indian country. If confirmed, I will be sure to get a better understanding of these challenges and develop solutions that prioritize public safety.

Question 6: Tribal Fee-to-Trust Process

Mr. Burgum, do you plan to take any actions that would change the fee-to-trust process for tribal nations?

- Will you commit to continuing to process fee-to-trust applications?

Response: If confirmed, I will commit to continuing to process fee-to-trust applications consistent with the Department's legal authorities.

Question 7: Manhattan Project National Historical Park

Mr. Burgum, Congress established the Manhattan Project National Historical Park in the Fiscal Year 2015 National Defense Authorization Act. This park is a unique partnership between the Department of Energy, which manages the facilities and controls access, and the National Park Service (NPS), which leads the interpretation. The park is also unique because it is located at three sites in three different states, including at Hanford in Washington state.

Since the inception of the park almost ten years ago, there has been an intentional effort by NPS, DOE, and the communities to work closely together across the three sites, and to avoid any appearance of preferential treatment towards any particular site. That was part of the rationale for locating the park superintendent in a neutral location, Denver. Recently the communities were informed on very short notice by NPS that the agency is planning on relocating the superintendent position to Santa Fe, in close proximity to the Los Alamos unit of the park. That decision has not been finalized yet, however.

- Would you please share your thoughts on Interior and the National Parks Service's role in supporting the Manhattan Project National Historical Park?

Response: If confirmed, I will learn more about this specific park and the role the National Park Service plays in its management.

I have significant concerns that NPS did not discuss this potentially significant change with any of the communities beforehand. The communities near the Hanford and Oak Ridge units of the park have sent letters to the NPS Intermountain Regional Director asking for further discussion before any decisions are made.

- Do I have your commitment that you will look into this issue, and not make any final decisions before the key community stakeholders at all three sites have had the opportunity to learn more about this proposed change, and to provide their input to NPS?

Response: Yes. If confirmed, I will place a very high value on input from local stakeholders.

Question 8: Offshore Energy

Mr. Burgum, as I mentioned at your nomination hearing, I am concerned this Administration's single-minded pursuit of oil and gas development above all could hurt the outdoor recreation

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

industry. This includes concerns that some decisions will come at the expense of hard-won federal designations that protect our most irreplaceable federal lands and waters.

Protecting our shorelines is also vitally important to a coastal state like mine. An oil spill off our beloved coastline could not only cause terrible environmental damage, but it would also threaten Washington's maritime industry that supports over 174,000 jobs and more than \$45 billion in annual revenue.

- Do you support offshore oil and gas drilling in federal waters off the coast of Washington state or the Western United States?

Response: Under the federal laws in our nation, I do not agree with the premise that we cannot support responsible energy development as well as other uses of the ocean, including outdoor recreation. However, as I have stated previously, the power to withdraw and amend a withdrawal has solely been granted to the President under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act.

Question 9: Wind Energy

Mr. Burgum, earlier this month President-elect Trump declared "We are going to have a policy where no windmills are being built promised that "no new windmills" would be built in the United States when he takes office.

- What role would you have as Secretary of Interior in fulfilling incoming President Trump's promise?
- What role would you have as Chair of the new National Energy Council, in fulfilling incoming President Trump's promise?

Response: As I stated in my hearing, the significant growth of generative AI is driving an increasing need for electricity in the United States. Having an all of the above energy mix is an important means by which to address this looming energy crisis, however ensuring reliability of the grid requires baseload generation. The Department of the Interior acts as steward of our nation's public lands, and ensures that the responsible development of all of these energy resources can occur in order to meet our national need. If confirmed, I will adhere to all laws and regulations applicable to this generation, including policy directives issued by the President.

Question 9: Western Water

Mr. Burgum, Western water policy is going to be one of the most important and challenging issues you will face. In the state of Washington, we have unique water challenges in experiencing extreme flooding in the western half of the state and managing annual droughts that exacerbate water supply for our farmers in the eastern portion of the state. We also generate 60% of our energy from hydropower.

How we manage water is critical and a key to success is working collaboratively with the Bureau of Reclamation and developing consensus from the ground up with communities and water users.

- If confirmed, will you support ground-up, consensus-driven solutions to water management?

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

- Will you support the development and implementation of technology, like Water A.I., that can better manage water supply, storage and use?

Response: As a former Governor of North Dakota, a western water state, I am very aware of the importance of water supply certainty and the challenges to meet that goal. One of the best ways to meet that goal is through community-driven consensus so that water users and the communities that depend on them have widespread support for construction and subsequent operation and maintenance activities. Technological innovation can be an important tool in helping achieve that consensus and improving water management in many cases.

The Yakima Basin Integrated Plan is a basin wide water project that focuses on balancing and fulfilling the needs of a robust agricultural sector, flood risk management, and salmon recovery. It's vital the Bureau of Reclamation continues to fund these projects.

- If confirmed, will you work to promote the need for water projects, like the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan and other irrigation and water conservation projects, to be considered in any infrastructure legislation?
- Will you commit to including funding for the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan in the Department of Interior's proposed budget?

Response: The State of Washington and the federal government authorized the first three phases of the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan, a bipartisan water use plan designed to help both agriculture and salmon. If confirmed, I will work with you and the rest of the Washington state delegation on issues relevant to the Yakima Basin Integrated Plan and the ongoing need in the Yakima basin.

Question 10: Fixed Climbing Anchors

Mr. Burgum, the issue of access to wilderness areas in my state is very important, at places like the Enchantments and North Cascades National Park. The last administration proposed controversial policies that would prohibit the use of fixed anchors, a standard climbing safety practice, for rock climbing and mountaineering.

- How do you plan to go forward with the climbing policies that are now required by the EXPLORE Act and can you give me assurances that access to my state's iconic wilderness areas won't be restricted for rock climbers and mountaineers?

Response: Outdoor recreation is good for the economy and it is good for the health of Americans. Congress acknowledged this last year with the passage of the EXPLORE Act. If confirmed, I will support outdoor recreation on our public lands, including activities like recreational rock climbing.

Question 11: Labor

Mr. Burgum, DOI is responsible for administering billions of dollars from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act.

- Will you support the implementation of these laws as enacted by Congress?

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Response: If confirmed, I will implement the laws as enacted by Congress.

- Will you uphold the standards that DOI signed the Department of Labor to apply high-road labor standards to all IRA and BIL funded projects.

Response: If confirmed, I will implement the laws as enacted by Congress.

Question 12: Federal Landscapes

Mr. Burgum, under the first Trump administration, Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Escalante national monuments were dramatically reduced—the protected area was cut down by 85%. These are sacred sites and culturally important lands to tribes in the region. Despite overwhelming support to keep these areas protected, the Trump administration attempted to roll back protections to allow mining and oil and gas development. President Biden restored full protections to Bears Ears, Grand Staircase Escalante, as well as other monuments that were stripped of protection by the Trump Administration.

- In areas like Bears Ears and Grand Staircase Escalante National Monuments, do you believe the value of the cultural resources, such as sacred sites, and outdoor recreation opportunities these monuments protect outweighs their prospective value from resource extraction?
- Will you commit to honoring and upholding protections for our existing national monuments?

Response to both questions: As discussed in my hearing, the Antiquities Act of 1906 was signed into law by President Theodore Roosevelt in order to give the President the authority to protect objects of historic or scientific interest that are owned or controlled by the Government of the United States. Ultimately, the Antiquities Act of 1906 grants the President the authority to designate or change monument boundaries.

Question 13: Protecting Public Lands in Alaska

Mr. Burgum, I have worked to maintain unique and irreplaceable federal lands in Alaska like the Tongass, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and Bristol Bay, home to the world's largest sockeye salmon run. There have always been development pressures, but what we proved is the relatively small short-term economic returns are not worth hurting places that are like nowhere else in the world, and in the case of Bristol Bay, support a multitude of good fishing jobs.

I bring this up because I know you will be pressed on issues impacting Alaska. I hope you will consider in each case whether short-term and limited economic gains from a resource extraction project outweighs the long-term impacts to developing these areas.

For example, the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act mandated two lease sales in the Arctic Refuge. The Congressional Budget Office projected the oil and gas leasing program would yield \$2.2 billion. However, both lease sales produced little to no bidding interest and thus revenue. In the first lease sale held during the first Trump Administration, no major oil companies showed up to bid. And the sale generated a mere \$12 million — less than 1% of the total revenue that was projected. The second lease sale held last week was also a complete dud; not a single company

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

bid – big or small. It appears that the private sector realizes that the economics don't support drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

- Governor Burgum, given these failed auctions, do you think any new lease sales in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge would result in more private sector interest or substantial revenues?
- And will you commit to meeting with all Tribal stakeholders before taking any actions in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge?

Response: The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, signed into law by President Trump, mandated not less than two lease sales in the Coastal Plain area adjacent to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. If confirmed, I will follow all applicable laws and regulations.

Question 14: National Petroleum Reserve - Alaska

The Western Arctic region in Alaska is also a vast one-of-a-kind place with immense oil and gas development pressure. The Western Arctic is a critical carbon sink, premiere tourist destination, contains unparalleled wildlife habitat, and has been home to Indigenous traditions for countless generations. The Department of the Interior just released a report and guidance that conclude that there cannot be development in the Western Arctic without harm to caribou and other key species, and it names subsistence as a “significant resource value” for the reserve that any development would jeopardize.

- Do you support Tribal subsistence uses of the Western Arctic, including the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska (NPR-A)?
- Do you commit to ensuring that those Tribal subsistence uses of NPR-A, including caribou are not jeopardized?

Response: I believe energy production currently is and will continue to be compatible with allowing subsistence for Alaska Natives.

Question 15: Trump's “National Energy Emergency” Declaration

Mr. Burgum, President-elect Trump has said that he plans to declare a “National Energy Emergency” on day one in office, with a focus on expanding domestic fossil fuel production.

- Do you believe that declaring a National Energy Emergency to increase fossil fuel production when U.S. oil and gas production is at an all-time high is the type of use Congress intended when passing the National Emergencies Act?
- What is the rationale this proposed unprecedented use of the National Emergencies Act when U.S. oil and gas production is already at an all-time high?
- Are you concerned that the National Emergencies Act to indiscriminately cut corners on environmental, cultural, and Tribal protections would be an ill-conceived and dangerous precedent?

Response: There is an unprecedented demand for energy. Our nation has been blessed with abundant energy resources. I cannot speculate on future actions by the President. However, if confirmed, I will ensure the responsible development of our nation's onshore and offshore resources.

Question 16: OPEC

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Mr. Burgum, I believe we need to face the reality and be honest that there's no way we can drill our way to full energy independence or dominance. Not as long as the OPEC+ cartel can manipulate world supply and hold great sway over our pump prices. Even though we are the world's largest oil producer, we do not control the vast reserves that other OPEC+ nations do, nor the globally-set price of crude. But we do now at least have alternative fuels. The driver filling up their car with electricity pays just a fraction of what they would pay at a gas station. An Energy Department study found that Washington state EV drivers would save around \$11,000 in fuel costs. Only by finally ending our dependence on fossil fuel can we permanently secure America's national security, maintain affordable energy prices, and tackle the climate crisis.

Please provide individual details answers to each of the following questions:

- Do you agree that OPEC+ has proven and technically recoverable reserves that greatly outnumber U.S.-controlled reserves?

Response: The U.S. Energy Information Administration has stated that OPEC+, comprising 23 countries, represents 59 percent of global oil production. Many of these states are authoritarian, hostile to the United States, or may inflate or obscure their technical and economically recoverable reserves. It is not appropriate for me to speculate as to the veracity of their data. What is clear is that the historic levels of oil and gas production from the United States are positive for the American economy, reduce oil prices in the global market, and limit the ability of OPEC+ states to use their cartel to manipulate the global energy trade to avail their policy goals, which are often hostile to the United States and its allies.

- Do you agree that the interests of OPEC+ countries like Russia and Iran do not align with our national interest?

Response: As stated in my previous response, I agree.

- Do you agree that the price of crude oil is set on international markets like ICE that respond to the global supply and production of crude oil?

Response: Yes, oil is a global commodity and priced accordingly.

- What level of increase in U.S. oil production do you think would meaningful impact the price of oil and reduce U.S. petroleum prices? Will this reduction result in meeting President Trump's campaign promise to reduce gasoline pump prices to \$2 per gallon?

Response: We have already seen that the unprecedented growth of US oil and gas production since broad deployment of hydraulic fracturing technologies over the past 20 years or so has reduced oil prices and increased American soft power. There are many other factors beyond oil prices that affect retail gasoline prices, but reducing the price of oil will facilitate lower prices at the pump.

- If confirmed, how will you help the Interior Department bring affordable fossil fuel alternatives to market?

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
January 16, 2025 Hearing: *The Burgum Nomination*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Doug Burgum

Response: If confirmed, I will implement the laws as enacted by Congress. If Congress directs the Department to facilitate energy development – whether fossil or renewable – we will implement those policies accordingly.

Question 17: Unused Oil & Gas Leases

Mr. Burgum, according to the latest Interior Department data there are over 10 million acres of existing onshore oil and gas leases that have been stockpiled, but are not producing, and there are almost 7,000 approved and available but unused permits to drill on those federal onshore leases.

- Why do you think these leases are not being used as they were intended to drill for more oil and gas?
- Why do you think these permits are not being used as they were intended to drill for more oil and gas?
- The size of these unused lands are about the same as Rhode Island, Delaware, Connecticut, and Hawaii combined, do you think its reasonable for these public lands to be off limits and unused for years at a time?
- Do you believe the Department of Interior should consider the disposition of this vast amount of public land locked-up in unused federal oil and gas leases, and if those unused leases are impeding other uses of our public lands and waters?

Response: I believe a healthy and vibrant offshore energy economy for ongoing oil and gas production is the best outcome for our Nation and for the American people, who have faced high energy prices for far too long. I believe all operators on the Outer Continental Shelf have an obligation to operate as safely as possible and comply with all federal regulations and requirements under law, which include lease terms that ultimately expire should they remain unused after a period of time.



AGUA CALIENTE BAND OF CAHUILLA INDIANS
TRIBAL COUNCIL

REID D. MILANOVICH CHAIRMAN • CANDACE PATENCIO ANDERSON VICE CHAIRMAN
SAVANA R. SAUBEL SECRETARY-TREASURER • JOHN R. PRECKWINKLE III MEMBER • VIRGINIA SIVA-GILLESPIE MEMBER

January 13, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the Nominee of Secretary; U.S. Department of Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich

I write today to support the nomination of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. We believe that Governor Burgum will be an outstanding member of the incoming Administration in this capacity.

The Secretary of Interior is the lead cabinet official charged with ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty obligations to Tribal Nations. Governor Burgum is a true leader who understands this responsibility, and his appointment is a step towards enhancing the federal-tribal partnership and addressing the pressing needs of our communities.

Governor Burgum has built a strong relationship of trust and transparency with the five tribes of North Dakota and will undoubtedly bring the same principles in his new role as Secretary. I strongly support Governor Burgum's nomination for this position.

I look forward to his swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate and future opportunities to work together to enhance and protect Tribal Nations.

Sincerely,

Reid D. Milanovich
Chairman, Tribal Council
AGUA CALIENTE BAND OF
CAHUILLA INDIANS



All Pueblo
Council of
Governors

Officers:
James R. Mountain, Chairman
Dominic Gachupin, Vice-Chairman
Governor Arden Kucate, Secretary

January 13, 2025

Acoma The Honorable Mike Lee
Cochiti Chairman
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Jemez The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Laguna Energy and Natural Resource Committee
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Nambe

Re: Support for Doug Burgum for Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich

On behalf of the All Indian Pueblos Council (APCG), I write today in support of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. APCG is pleased to hear of Governor Burgum's nomination to serve the incoming Administration in this capacity.

Sandia

San Felipe The Secretary of Interior is the lead cabinet official charged with ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty obligations to Tribal nations. Governor Burgum has built a strong relationship of trust and transparency with the five tribes of North Dakota and will undoubtedly bring the same principles to his new role as Secretary. We look forward to engaging with him on important issues like natural resource development and the protection of tribal sacred lands.

San Ildefonso

Santa Ana We urge Governor Burgum's swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate and look forward to working with him on future opportunities to enhance and protect Tribal Nations. I will make myself available to you and your staff if you have any questions and would like to further discuss, you may contact me at (505) 412.3974.

Santo Domingo Sincerely,

Taos

Tesuque 

Ysleta del Sur James R. Mountain
Chairman
Zia All Pueblo Council of Governors

Zuni Cc: 20 Pueblo Governors

January 15, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman
 Senate Energy and Natural Resources
 Committee
 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member
 Senate Energy and Natural Resources
 Committee
 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

On behalf of the millions of hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, professional wildlife-scientists, and other outdoor enthusiasts that our organizations represent, we are writing to express our strong support for the nomination of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the Interior. Governor Burgum has extensive experience in leadership, public service as well as business, and paired with his passion for conservation and the issues of importance to sportsmen and women, we believe he is well positioned to lead the Department of the Interior (DOI).

Most recently during his time as Governor of North Dakota, Governor Burgum demonstrated his strong commitment to conservation by successfully balancing a myriad of issues, including fish, wildlife, and land and water conservation as well as other resource management. Governor Burgum brings a unique sense of pragmatism to managing and addressing the issues of importance within the purview of DOI, such as the management of public lands that are critical to sportsmen and women for access, fish and wildlife conservation, among many others. As a hunter and angler himself, Governor Burgum recognizes and understands the challenges that fish, wildlife, and outdoor enthusiasts are facing in the 21st century.

In addition to his tenure in public service, Governor Burgum also has demonstrated an impressive ability to lead in the private sector. His leadership style in the private sector is well-respected given his commitment to transparency, self-accountability, and innovation. These skillsets and traits positioned Governor Burgum to grow his private sector companies, and we believe these same skillsets will yield positive benefits for DOI, sportsmen and women, and the conservation of our nation's fish, wildlife, and their associated habitats.

In summary, Governor Burgum will bring a thoughtful, collaborative, and measured perspective to the Department of the Interior. His background and experiences in both the private and public sectors will position him to effectively lead DOI.

For these reasons, we urge the Committee to support Governor Burgum's nomination to serve as the next Secretary of the Interior.

Sincerely,

American Catfishing Association
 American Sportfishing Association

American Woodcock Society
Archery Trade Association
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Bass Anglers Sportsman Society
Bonefish & Tarpon Trust
Boone and Crockett Club
California Waterfowl Association
Camp Fire Club of America
Center for Sportfishing Policy
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Houston Safari Club
International Game Fish Association
Major League Fishing
Marine Retailers Association of America
Mule Deer Foundation
National Bobwhite & Grassland Initiative Foundation
National Deer Association
National Professional Anglers Association
National Rifle Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
North American Falconers Association
North American Grouse Partnership
Pheasants Forever
Professional Outfitters and Guides of America
Quail Forever
Ruffed Grouse Society
Safari Club International
Sportsmen's Alliance
The Bass Federation
The Conservation Fund
The Walleye Federation
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Wild Sheep Foundation
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute
Wildlife Mississippi



January 21, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee (R-UT)
 Chair
 Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources
 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich (D-NM)
 Ranking Member
 Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources
 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

On behalf of the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) – the business association of the nation’s engineering industry – we wish to express our strong support for the confirmation of Governor Doug Burgum as the next U.S. Secretary of the Interior.

Governor Burgum is a proven leader in both government and the private sector. As governor of North Dakota, the Governor demonstrated pragmatic and forward-thinking solutions to support an “all of the above” energy agenda that should be applied nationwide. In addition to making full use of the state’s diverse energy resources, his agenda also included setting carbon neutrality goals through the use of innovative carbon capture technologies, establishing a new standard for an energy-producing state.

This experience will be critical as the agency plays an important role going forward in partnership with the Department of Energy and other agencies in guiding the nation’s energy agenda. America’s engineering industry also looks forward to working with Governor Burgum on other priorities within the agency, including our ongoing work to improve the roads, trails, historic structures, and visitor centers within the National Park Service (NPS). Deferred maintenance exists at almost every national park site across the country, including crucial repairs to aging buildings and historical structures, electrical, water, mechanical, and plumbing systems, and other infrastructure that is vital to keeping parks accessible and safe for visitors.

We are confident that Governor Burgum will be an effective leader as Secretary of the Interior. We thank you for scheduling this committee hearing so early in the new year, and we look forward to a prompt confirmation process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Linda Bauer Darr'.

Linda Bauer Darr
 President and CEO



American Exploration &
Mining Association
EST. 1895

16201 E. Indiana Ave., Suite 3280
Spokane Valley, WA 99216
(509)624-1158 - www.miningamerica.org

January 14, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and
Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and
Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: AEMA Letter of Support for the Nomination for the Honorable Doug Burgum to be
Secretary of Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

On behalf of the 1,800 members of the American Exploration & Mining Association (AEMA), we urge your support for the appointment of Doug Burgum as Secretary of the Department of the Interior (DOI). Governor Burgum is highly qualified for this position. Having recently completed his second term as Governor of North Dakota, a state with federal lands and a major endowment of energy minerals, Gov. Burgum well understands the role he would assume should he be confirmed.

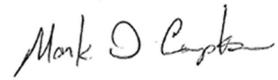
Gov. Burgum has long had a reputation as a leader who is willing to listen to multiple viewpoints, and forge solutions that are innovative and well-balanced. Gov. Burgum also has established a track record of working to achieve bipartisan solutions through his participation in the Western Governors Association. These qualities will serve him well at Interior. We urge your support and a swift confirmation.

AEMA is a 130-year old national association representing the minerals industry with members residing in 46 U.S. states. AEMA is the recognized national voice for exploration, the junior mining sector, and maintaining access to public lands, and represents the entire mining life cycle, from exploration to reclamation and closure. Our members work closely with DOI to responsibly develop the mineral resources our society requires.

AEMA Letter of Support for the Honorable Doug Burgum
January 14, 2025

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Yours truly,



Mark Compton



Office of the President

January 2, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee, Chairman
 The Honorable Martin Heinrich, Ranking Member
 Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 304 Dirksen Senate Building
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

On behalf of the American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA), I am writing in support of President Trump's nomination of Gov. Doug Burgum as head of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

AF&PA serves to advance U.S. paper and wood products manufacturers through fact-based public policy and marketplace advocacy. The forest products industry accounts for approximately 5% of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP, manufactures about \$350 billion in essential products annually and employs about 925,000 people. The industry meets a payroll of about \$65 billion annually and over 75 percent of our facilities are located in counties that are over 80 percent rural. The forest products industry is circular by nature. AF&PA member companies make essential products from renewable and recyclable resources, generate renewable bioenergy and are committed to continuous improvement through the industry's sustainability initiative — [Better Practices, Better Planet 2030: Sustainable Products for a Sustainable Future.](#)

The paper and wood products industry is a leader in the production and use of renewable, carbon-beneficial bioenergy. We look forward to collaborating with the Department of Interior and the National Energy Council on key issues related to the permitting, production, generation, distribution, regulation, and transportation of all forms of American energy. Together, we aim to further strengthen American manufacturing.

Based on our knowledge of Governor Burgum and his background, we believe his expertise, experience, and professionalism make him an excellent candidate for this important position.

Kind Regards,

Heidi Brock

Heidi Brock

President and Chief Executive Officer



January 15, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman
 Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lee:

The American Gas Association is pleased to support the nomination of Governor Doug Burgum to be the U.S. Secretary of Interior.

AGA represents more than 200 local energy companies committed to the safe and reliable delivery of clean natural gas to more 189 million Americans and 5.8 million businesses in all 50 states. Affordable, reliable, resilient and domestically abundant natural gas has been and will continue to be the cornerstone of America's economy and America's energy independence. Our natural gas utility industry is committed to investing, building and innovating for the families and businesses who depend on us every minute of every day.

As you know, the Department of Interior plays the crucial role in ensuring that domestic onshore and offshore natural gas exploration and production are properly managed to foster domestic economic growth, serve our national security interests, and meet the increasing supply demands of our industrial and commercial base, electric generation needs and, most specifically to AGA, expanding residential use. We look forward to working with the new Secretary of Interior on continued robust production of natural gas on behalf of our residential, commercial and industrial customers nationwide.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer our support for Governor Dough Burgum's nomination. Please let us know if we can provide any additional information or answer any questions.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'George Lowe'.

George Lowe
 Vice President, Governmental Affairs and Public Policy
 American Gas Association

From: Jack Cramton <CramtonJ@api.org>
Date: January 14, 2025 at 5:24:14 PM EST
To: "Crofts, Sam (Energy)" <Sam_Crofts@energy.senate.gov>, "McCurdy, Jacob (Energy)" <Jacob_Mccurdy@energy.senate.gov>
Subject: Statements of Support- DOI & DOE

Good evening,

Please see below statements of support for the Burgum and Wright nominations. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Secretary of Interior

“As Governor of a top production state, Doug Burgum has long been a champion for American energy leadership. We are pleased to support his nomination and look forward to working with him once confirmed to implement a pro-American energy approach to federal leasing, starting with removing barriers to development on federal lands and waters and developing a new five-year offshore program.” **—API President and CEO Mike Sommers**

Secretary of Energy

“Chris Wright’s experience in the American energy sector gives him an important perspective that will inform his leadership of the Department of Energy. We are pleased to support his nomination and look forward to working with him once confirmed to bolster American geopolitical strength by lifting DOE’s pause on LNG export permits and ensuring the open access of American energy for our allies around the world.” **—API President and CEO Mike Sommers**

Best,

Jack Cramton

Vice President
Federal Relations
o: 202.682.8160
e: cramtonj@api.org
www.api.org

Senator Bo Biteman
President of the Senate
Wyoming Senate Senate District 21



address P.O. Box 283 • Ranchester, WY 82839
mobile (307) 751-6178
email Bo.Biteman@wyoleg.gov

January 23, 2025

Senator Mike Lee, Chairman
Senator Martin Heinrich, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee
United States Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

We, the undersigned members of Wyoming's legislative leadership, write to express our strong support for the confirmation of Governor Doug Burgum as Secretary of the United States Department of Interior. As elected officials who are deeply committed to the values and prosperity of the United States and our state, we believe that Gov. Burgum's private sector and government experience, proven track record, and unwavering dedication to the ideals of America make him an exemplary candidate for Secretary of the Interior and we ask you support his confirmation.

Throughout his tenure as Governor of North Dakota, Mr. Burgum demonstrated a remarkable ability to drive economic growth, foster innovation, and implement policies that benefit all citizens. His commitment to fiscal responsibility and forward-thinking approach to the administration of government, has resulted in significant advancements in technology, education, and infrastructure in his home state. These achievements are a testament to his capability to lead such a large and significant federal agency. We believe he will create efficiencies to drive the wise stewardship of our Nation's lands.

Gov. Burgum's background as a successful entrepreneur and business leader further underscores his qualifications. His understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing our economy, particularly in the energy and technology sectors, positions him uniquely to contribute to the development of sound policies that will enhance America's competitiveness and security.

Wyoming is home to a vast amount of federal lands. These lands play a crucial role in our Nation's economy and way of life. Energy from Wyoming has powered America for decades and natural resources like timber and critical minerals can be used to build more economic growth. That is why effective management of federal lands is essential for America's livelihood. Gov. Burgum's experience and commitment to responsible land management make him well-suited to oversee these important areas. His leadership will ensure that these lands are managed in a way that benefits the communities that depend on them and all other Americans.

Senator Mike Lee, Chairman
Senator Martin Heinrich, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee
January 23, 2025
Page 2

Wyoming is also a leader in producing energy and developing natural resources. Our state is at the forefront of the production of coal, oil, natural gas, and renewable energy sources. Gov. Burgum's deep understanding of the energy sector and his proven track record of supporting responsible resource development will be invaluable in promoting policies that support economic growth and energy independence.

Gov. Burgum has shown he can achieve meaningful results. His inclusive leadership style and commitment to listening to different perspectives ensure that he will serve all Americans with integrity and fairness. We are confident that Gov. Burgum will bring the same level of excellence and dedication to the Interior Department. His leadership will undoubtedly contribute to the continued prosperity and well-being of our nation.

We respectfully urge you to support Governor Doug Burgum's confirmation and look forward to the positive impact he will have in this critical role.

Sincerely,



Bo Bigman
President, Wyoming State Senate



Tim Salazar
Vice President, Wyoming State Senate



Tara Nethercott
Majority Floor Leader, Wyoming State Senate



Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma

P.O. Box 1210 · Durant, Oklahoma 74702-1210 · (580) 924-8280

Gary Batton
Chief

Jack Austin, Jr.
Assistant Chief

January 14, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Senate Energy and Natural Resource
Committee
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Senate Energy and Natural Resource
Committee
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the Former North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum to Serve as the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior

Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

On behalf of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, I am writing to express support for the nomination of former North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Governor Burgum's extensive leadership experience and commitment to public service make him exceptionally qualified to lead the Department of the Interior and oversee its critical responsibilities to the American people, including its trust responsibilities to Native nations.

We have heard firsthand from our brother and sister Tribes in North Dakota that Burgum understands his duty and responsibility to federally recognized Tribes and as Governor, Burgum built a strong relationship with these Tribes based on trust and transparency. The Department of the Interior plays a pivotal role in upholding the trust relationship between the federal government and tribal nations. Governor Burgum's leadership will ensure that this relationship is not only maintained but strengthened.

For example, Burgum advocated for tax-sharing agreements with Tribes, undertook efforts to permanently display Tribal flags outside the governor's office, pushed for law enforcement partnerships to improve emergency response times in Tribal communities, and signed legislation that codified the Indian Child Welfare Act into state law. The annual Strengthening Government-to-Government conference was started under his leadership, so that state officials could hear directly from Tribal leaders about the issues affecting Native communities. Burgum has proven that states provide better outcomes for all their citizens when they partner and collaborate with Tribal nations.

Based on this evidence, we believe that Governor Burgum will bring this same level of confidence to Tribes at the federal level, and we encourage the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the U.S. Senate to swiftly approve the nomination of Burgum as Secretary of Interior. His vision,

integrity, and collaborative approach will bring stability and forward-thinking solutions to the Department at a time when effective leadership is critically needed. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Gary Batton, Chief
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma



Picayune Rancheria
of the
CHUKCHANSI INDIANS
711 Lucky Lane, Coarsegold, CA 93614
Mailing Address: 46575 Road 417, Coarsegold, CA 93614

January 17, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the nominee of Secretary; U.S. Department of Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking member Heinrich

I write today in support of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. I am thrilled at his nomination to serve the incoming Administration in this capacity.

The Secretary of Interior is the lead cabinet official charged with ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty responsibility with Tribal nations, he not only understands this relationship and duty, but will put actions to words.

Governor Burgum has built a strong relationship of trust and transparency with the five tribes of North Dakota. Governor Burgum will undoubtedly bring the same principles in his new role as Secretary. We can think of no one better for this job than Governor Burgum and look forward to his swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

Sincerely,

Denise McCombs-Esquivel
Treasurer Denise McCombs-Esquivel

TRIBAL COUNCIL

<i>Tracey Hopkins</i> Chairwoman	<i>Melvin Espe</i> Vice-Chairman	<i>Denise McCombs-Esquivel</i> Treasurer	<i>Michael Wynn</i> Secretary	<i>Marco Alcantar</i> Member-at-Large	<i>Hillary Battles</i> Member-at-Large	<i>Elena Sanders</i> Member-at-Large
-------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	---	----------------------------------	--	---	---



January 16, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman
 U.S. Senate Committee on
 Energy and Natural Resources
 304 Dirksen Senate Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member
 U.S. Senate Committee on
 Energy and Natural Resources
 304 Dirksen Senate Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

On behalf of Citizens for Responsible Energy Solutions (CRES), I write in strong support of the nomination of Governor Doug Burgum to be our nation's next Secretary of the Interior and I encourage the Committee to advance his nomination. CRES is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting conservative solutions to address our nation's energy, economic and environmental security while ensuring America retains its global competitive edge.

Governor Burgum is a proven leader who values an all-of-the-above energy approach and the importance of environmental stewardship. We believe he will balance policies to unleash American energy and critical minerals production with ensuring public input and protecting our environment in order to bring down energy costs for everyday Americans. Additionally, Governor Burgum will enter office with a broad mandate to coordinate and improve our federal government's onerous energy permitting, production, generation and distribution policies, while prioritizing all forms of domestic energy production.

We are confident that under the leadership of President Trump and Governor Burgum, the United States can reduce our reliance on adversarial supply chains, reinvigorate our manufacturing sector, encourage private-sector development and reduce global emissions.

CRES encourages the Committee to favorably advance Governor Doug Burgum's nomination as the 55th Secretary of the Interior.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Reams".

Heather Reams
 CRES President



COEUR D'ALENE TRIBE
 CHIEF J. ALLAN CHAIRMAN
 P.O. BOX 408
 PLUMMER, IDAHO 83851
 (208) 686-5403 • Fax (208) 686-8813
 email: chairman@cdatribe-nsn.gov

January 10, 2025

Via First-Class Mail & E-Mail

The Honorable Mike Lee, Chairman
 Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 304 Dirksen Senate Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510
mike_lee@lee.senate.gov

The Honorable Martin Heinrich, Ranking Member
 Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 304 Dirksen Senate Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510
martin_heinrich@heinrich.senate.gov

Re: Nomination of Doug Burgum for Secretary of the Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

On behalf of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, I write to support the nomination of Governor Doug Burgum for Secretary of the Department of the Interior. President Trump has nominated an effective leader who not only understands the needs of Indian country, but appreciates the uniqueness of working with Indian tribes. The Tribe requests that your Committee favorably report this nomination to the full Senate as expeditiously as possible.

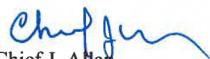
Indian tribes, including the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, are sovereign nations that too often get minimized, ignored or overlooked in Washington D.C. As Governor of North Dakota, Doug Burgum has prioritized engagement with Tribes. He has a proven track record of building and maintaining effective government-to-government relationships between States and Tribes founded on mutual respect and understanding. Governor Burgum has demonstrated that he is willing to listen, engage in meaningful discussions, and explore opportunities to work together. When confronted with disagreement, Governor Burgum works to find common ground and pragmatic solutions. His commitment to Indian tribes is both honorable and appreciated.

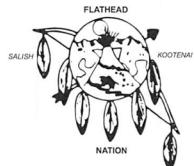
The Honorable Mike Lee
The Honorable Martin Heinrich
January 10, 2025
Page 2

Governor Burgum has successfully led the State of North Dakota through a tremendous onslaught of issues, including significant drought, crippling storms, and budget shortfalls. Under his leadership the State of North Dakota has never been stronger. And through it all, he has ensured that Tribes have a seat at the table. As Secretary of the Interior, he will deal with similar complex challenges across the west and throughout Indian country, but his experience ensures that he will be able to immediately tackle those issues upon confirmation.

For all of these reasons, the Coeur d'Alene Tribe strongly supports the nomination of Governor Doug Burgum to be the next Secretary of the Interior. The Tribe respectfully requests that this Committee and the full Senate confirm his appointment without delay.

Sincerely,


Chief J. Alan
Chairman



A Confederation of the Salish,
Pend d' Oreille
and Kootenai Tribes

THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION
P.O. BOX 278
Pablo, Montana 59855
406-275-2700
Fax: council.fax@cskt.org
Website: www.cskt.org



A People of Vision

January 10, 2025

Via First-Class Mail & E-Mail

The Honorable Mike Lee, Chairman
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
mike_lee@lee.senate.gov

TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Michael Dolson - Chairman
Tom McDonald - Vice Chair
Martin Charlo - Secretary
James Steele Jr - Treasurer
Carole Lankford
James "Bing" Matt
Len Twoeeth
Jim Malatree
Jennifer Finley
Danielle Matt

The Honorable Martin Heinrich, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
martin_heinrich@heinrich.senate.gov

Re: Nomination of Doug Burgum for Secretary of the Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

On behalf of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation in Montana, I write to support the nomination of Governor Doug Burgum for Secretary of the Department of the Interior. President Trump undoubtedly recognized the value of Governor Burgum's record of effective leadership. Governor Burgum's leadership reflects and understanding of the circumstances facing Indian Country and a keen awareness of the unique government-to-government relationship among Indian tribes, the United States and state governments. Accordingly, we respectfully request that your Committee favorably report this nomination to the full Senate as expeditiously as possible.

Governor Burgum's commitment to meaningful engagement with Indian tribes and their leaders is unparalleled. Time and again he navigated challenging issues by ensuring that Tribal leaders held a seat at the table where their views and priorities were heard,

considered and addressed. During his tenure North Dakota faced unprecedented drought, catastrophic storms and challenging budgetary constraints. With each of these challenges, Governor Burgum's administration sought out Tribal input and worked tirelessly to find creative solutions to address Tribal concerns.

Accordingly, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes support the nomination of Governor Doug Burgum to be the next Secretary of the Interior respectfully request that this Committee and the full Senate confirm his appointment without delay.

Sincerely,



Michael Dolson
Tribal Council Chairman



January 14, 2025

Chairman Mike Lee
363 Russell Senate Office Building
United States Senate
Washington DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lee,

The Domestic Energy Producers' Alliance (DEPA) is proud to support the nomination Governor Doug Burgum of North Dakota as Secretary of the Interior.

Governor Burgum has brought a results-oriented, business-minded approach to North Dakota, where agriculture and energy dominate the economy. Burgum has championed tax cuts, reduced regulatory burdens, and emphasized sustainable development of natural resources.

As Secretary of the Interior, Burgum will oversee critical aspects of the nation's public lands and energy resources, bringing a balanced approach that prioritizes conservation while enabling responsible energy production. His deep understanding of federal-state partnerships and commitment to practical governance aligns seamlessly with the priorities of the incoming administration.

Governor Burgum exemplifies the principles DEPA stands for: promoting domestic energy production, fostering innovation, and protecting the sovereignty of states to manage their resources effectively. His nomination sends a strong signal that the President-elect is committed to an energy strategy that prioritizes national security, economic prosperity, and environmental responsibility.

America needs leaders who understand the transformative power of energy in improving lives. Governor Doug Burgum embodies the vision and expertise required to lead the Department of the Interior during this pivotal time for our nation.

DEPA is a nationwide collaboration of 39 coalition associations – from California to West Virginia, Texas to Montana – representing individuals and companies engaged in domestic onshore oil and natural gas exploration and production. DEPA is a non-partisan association seeking common ground, and in common sense solutions to the challenges facing American oil and natural gas production through educating policymakers on the vital role of domestic oil and gas production in supporting the U.S. economy, energy independence, and global leadership.

We urge the Senate to confirm Governor Burgum without delay.

Sincerely,

Jerry R. Simmons
CEO/President
Domestic Energy Producers' Alliance



16515 Centerfield Drive, Suite 201
 Eagle River, AK 99577
 P: 907.696.2828
www.ekluthainc.com

January 10, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee, Chairman
 Energy and Natural Resources Committee
 363 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich, Ranking Member
 Energy and Natural Resources Committee
 709 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

Re: Support for the Nominee for Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

As a representative of Eklutna, Inc., an Alaska Native Corporation serving the Dena'ina people of Southcentral Alaska, I write to express strong support for Governor Doug Burgum as the nominee for Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. His nomination to this vital role is a positive step forward for Tribal nations and Alaska Native communities.

The Secretary of the Interior carries the critical responsibility of upholding the United States' trust and treaty obligations to Tribal nations. Governor Burgum has consistently demonstrated an understanding of this duty, matched by a proven record of action to honor these commitments.

During his tenure as Governor of North Dakota, Governor Burgum built relationships founded on trust, transparency, and mutual respect with the five tribes of his state. His ability to engage in collaborative and principled leadership positions him as an excellent choice for Secretary of the Interior.

I am confident that Governor Burgum will bring this same dedication to his new role, ensuring the Interior Department continues to advance its mission in partnership with Tribal and Alaska Native communities. I urge the Senate to confirm his nomination at the earliest opportunity.

Sincerely,

Kyle N. Foster
 Chief Executive Officer
 Eklutna, Inc.



President – Craig Simpson
 Vice President – Clay Scott
 Treasurer – Paul Arrington
 Exec. Vice President – Greg Morrison

December 20, 2024

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Committee Staff:

On behalf of the National Water Resources Association (NWRA), I want to express our strong support for North Dakota Governor, Doug Burgum, as the nominee for Secretary of the Department of the Interior. Governor Burgum's leadership, experience, and commitment to natural resource management make him a strong choice for this position.

NWRA is a nonprofit federation of state water resources associations, regional associations, and agriculture and municipal water agencies. Our members provide water and hydropower to approximately 50 million individuals, families, agricultural producers and other industries in a manner that supports our communities large and small, our economy and our environment.

As a leader of North Dakota, Governor Burgum has championed innovative approaches in resource management, energy initiatives, and community development. He has collaborated with various stakeholders to advance policies that expand access to critical infrastructure programs. His efforts include initial investments in projects aimed at addressing long-term challenges and ensuring sustainable development. These achievements highlight his commitment to finding solutions, fostering collaboration, and delivering impactful results.

We are confident that Governor Burgum will bring strong leadership, pragmatic solutions, and a spirit of collaboration to the Department of the Interior. NWRA supports Governor Doug Burgum's nomination and we urge the Senate to confirm him. We stand ready to assist and support his work as Secretary of the Interior.

Thank you for considering our views on this important nomination. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Greg Morrison
 Executive Vice President
 National Water Resources Association

Craig Simpson
 Board President
 National Water Resources Association



The Honorable Mike Lee
Chair, U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources

January 13, 2025

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

GLAAD, the world's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) media advocacy organization, is reaching out to urge you to ask Doug Burgum, nominee for United States Secretary of the Interior, about his record and policy positions that affect LGBTQ Americans during his upcoming confirmation hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

The safety and rights of LGBTQ people depend on leaders who will protect the rights of all people. This confirmation hearing presents a crucial opportunity to examine Gov. Burgum's views on LGBTQ equality and his plans to address these issues in his potential role as Secretary of the Interior. GLAAD has documented Gov. Burgum's LGBTQ record, [here](#).

The U.S. Secretary of the Interior plays a vital role in managing public lands and resources while also influencing policies that affect communities across the nation. This includes ensuring that LGBTQ people are treated fairly in federal land management policies and advocating for protections against discrimination in outdoor recreation and conservation efforts.

Here are some suggested questions:

LGBTQ Rights in Federal Policies

While serving as Governor of North Dakota, you initially expressed support for LGBTQ-inclusive non-discrimination laws but later signed legislation that restricts rights for transgender people.

- **Question:** Can you clarify your current position on LGBTQ rights? Do you believe that all people should be protected from discrimination in federal policies including those related to land use and public services?

Discriminatory Legislation

In 2023, you signed multiple bills that restrict LGBTQ rights, including legislation targeting drag performances and a “religious refusal” bill that permits discrimination against LGBTQ people.

- **Question:** How do you reconcile these actions with your responsibility to protect all Americans’ rights as Secretary of the Interior?
- **Question:** What steps will you take to ensure that federal policies under your leadership do not promote discrimination against LGBTQ people?

Impact on Public Lands and Recreation

Access to public lands is vital for all Americans, including the LGBTQ community. Discrimination can deter people from enjoying these spaces.

- **Question:** What specific initiatives would you implement as Secretary of the Interior to ensure that LGBTQ people feel safe and welcome in national parks and other public lands?
- **Question:** If confirmed, how would you advocate for policies that ensure equitable treatment of transgender people within the Department of the Interior’s programs?

Environmental Justice and Inclusion

The role of Secretary of the Interior involves addressing environmental justice issues that disproportionately affect marginalized communities. LGBTQ people face greater risk to the negative effects of climate change compared with non-LGBTQ individuals, are more likely to live in areas with poor infrastructure and access to vital resources, and are more likely to be “overlooked in local and national relief efforts,” especially in communities where religious-affiliated organizations often provide relief.

- **Question:** How would you integrate LGBTQ rights into broader environmental justice initiatives?
- **Question:** What strategies would you implement to ensure that LGBTQ voices are included in decision-making processes regarding land use and conservation, and that marginalized people are not further overlooked in times of crisis?

Thank you for considering these questions during this important hearing. The safety and freedom of LGBTQ people depend on your engagement with the nominee and your ability to hold him accountable for his record and proposals.

Sincerely,



Sarah Kate Ellis
President and CEO



Heritage Waters Coalition
PO Box 924
Silver City, NM 88062

January 12, 2025

Senator John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Mike Lee
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Thune and Chairman Lee,

On behalf of the Heritage Waters Coalition, I am writing to strongly support the confirmation of Governor Doug Burgum as the next Secretary of the Department of the Interior. Governor Burgum's exemplary leadership as Governor of North Dakota and his profound commitment to safeguarding the responsible use of land and water resources uniquely qualify him for this critical role.

Under Governor Burgum's tenure, North Dakota emerged as a national leader in energy production, natural resource management, and fostering meaningful state-tribal partnerships. His pragmatic approach and proven ability to balance economic prosperity with environmental stewardship embody the principles we advocate for at the Heritage Waters Coalition: protecting private property and water rights while ensuring long-term sustainability.

Governor Burgum's collaborative style has earned him respect across industries and stakeholder groups, from property owners to conservation advocates. His leadership as Chairman of the North Dakota Land Board has showcased his ability to promote common-sense policies that enhance productivity, protect cultural heritage, and limit unnecessary regulatory overreach. These qualities are urgently needed at the Department of the Interior to counterbalance years of federal policies that have imposed costly burdens on taxpayers and private property owners.

We believe Governor Burgum's confirmation is essential to restoring innovation, efficiency, and a balanced approach to land and water management at the federal level. His vision aligns with the needs of the American people: policies that safeguard our rights, honor our heritage, and promote responsible stewardship of our natural resources.

We urge you to move swiftly to confirm Governor Burgum as Secretary of the Interior. His experience, leadership, and unwavering commitment to the responsible management of our nation's resources will undoubtedly serve the Department and the country with distinction.

Sincerely,

Drew Lesofski

Drew Lesofski
Executive Director
Heritage Waters Coalition



January 13, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 United States Senator
 Chairman, Senate Energy and
 Natural Resources Committee

Re: Mr. Doug Burgum Nomination for Secretary of Interior

Dear Chairman Lee,

Hispanics In Energy, a national non-profit organization designed to propel Hispanic inclusion in the energy sector, supports Mr. Doug Burgum's confirmation as Secretary of the Interior and Chair of the National Energy Council.

Mr. Burgum supports innovation by championing technology, particularly education and public services. He supports STEM education to prepare students for the evolving job market.

As governor of an energy-rich state, Mr. Burgum navigated policies balancing fossil fuel development with emerging renewable energy interests. He supported carbon capture and storage technologies to address environmental concerns.

Hispanic Americans represent 20% of America's population. Our mission is to increase Hispanic American participation in energy jobs, business, and executive-level positions in a legal and fair play manner while respecting all other communities' rights and aspirations.

Equal opportunities for Hispanics in the energy sector have been elusive. Few Hispanics hold key positions within the federal government, especially in regulatory bodies such as the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and Nuclear Regulatory Commission. The National Energy Council can help promote equal opportunities for the benefit of all Americans.

We believe Mr. Burgum is the right choice and urge his Senate confirmation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jose L. Perez
 President & Chief Executive Officer
jose@hispanicsinenergy.com



January 13, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Senate Committee on Energy
and Natural Resources

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Energy
and Natural Resources

RE: Indian Gaming Association Supports Governor Doug Burgum for Secretary of the Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

On behalf of the Indian Gaming Association (IGA) and our 189 Member Tribes, including four within North Dakota, I write to support Governor Doug Burgum's nomination to serve as Secretary of the Interior. IGA's mission is to support Indian gaming as a means of generating essential Tribal government revenue, creating jobs, and building strong Tribal governments. In Indian Country, we appreciate Governor Burgum's positive outreach to North Dakota's Tribes and his consistent track record on nation-to-nation consultation and economic development. If confirmed, we fully expect that Governor Burgum would continue that same commitment to Tribes across the country as Secretary of the Interior.

During the past eight years in office, Governor Burgum has shown a deep commitment to being a champion for Tribes in North Dakota by meeting with their leadership to consult on issues important to their communities, including strengthening government-to-government relations, healthcare, mental health and substance misuse, public safety and law enforcement, education and Tribal economic development. Governor Burgum has shown he has a comprehensive understanding of Indian Country's needs and values, and we expect that he will serve America honorably as Secretary of the Interior. Based on the experience of our Member Tribes within North Dakota, we offer our support for Doug Burgum's nomination for Secretary of the Interior and ask you to consider giving him your full support. Thank you for your time on this matter and for your continued allyship on behalf of Indian Country.

Sincerely,


Chairman Ernest L. Stevens



January 14, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman
 Committee on Energy and Natural
 Resources
 U.S. Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member
 Committee on Energy and Natural
 Resources
 U.S. Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

On behalf of the Institute of Makers of Explosives (IME), I write in support of confirming Mr. Doug Bergum to the position of Secretary of the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI). Mr. Bergum's leadership experience as a businessman and as Governor of North Dakota makes him uniquely qualified to lead the DOI.

The commercial explosives industry, including manufacturers, distributors and users, is vital to the U.S. economy, contributing more than \$19 billion annually to the U.S. economy and creating 15,000 direct industry jobs and more than 60,000 total jobs.

Our products play a vital role in ensuring our nation has a diverse energy supply that is both abundant and affordable. This includes traditional sources of energy like coal, oil, and natural gas. Commercial explosives also play a significant role in sourcing the critical minerals necessary for the manufacture of modern renewable energy technologies that are part of a low-carbon economy.

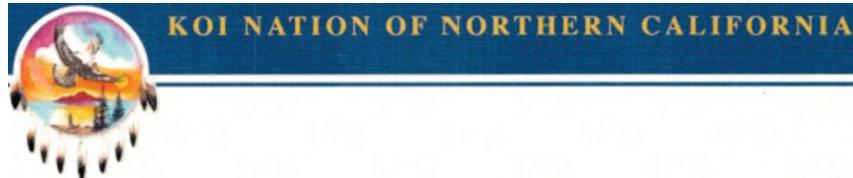
We believe that Mr. Bergum will provide strong leadership as Secretary by developing and implementing an improved permitting process that ensures environmental protection, reduces red tape, promotes innovation and grows the economy.

I strongly encourage the committee to approve Mr. Bergum for the position of Secretary of the U.S. Department of Interior and favorably report his nomination to the full Senate for confirmation.

Sincerely,

J. Clark Mica
 President

1212 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 650, Washington, DC 20005, USA, (202) 429-9280



January 13, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 304 Dirksen Senate Building
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

Doug Burgum has been a tireless advocate for Indigenous rights and Indian sovereignty during his time as North Dakota governor, and has purposefully improved the lines of communication between his administration and the five Tribes within the state. And it's led to their overwhelming support for his confirmation as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

As Governor, he also pushed for tax-sharing agreements, added a permanent display of all five tribal flags outside the Office of Governor at the state capitol and insisted on a partnership with law enforcement to allow better emergency response times on reservations.

These actions – which are more than just words, are meaningful to us because it's important to have an ally leading the Interior Department who understands the unique challenges that we face – and it's why we wholeheartedly support his confirmation.

Respectfully,

Chairman Darin Beltran
 Koi Nation of Northern California

cc: Koi Nation Tribal Council



Chairman
Gerald Gray Jr.

January 16, 2025

1st Vice Chairman
Clarence Silversten

The Honorable Steve Daines
U.S. Senate
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tim Sheehy
U.S. Senate
G55 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

2nd Vice Chairman
Leona Kienenberger

Secretary/Treasurer
Colleen Hill

Re: Support for the Nomination of the Honorable Doug Burgum as
Secretary of the Interior

Council Members
Iris Killeagle
Alisa Herodes

Senator Daines & Senator Sheehy,

The Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana writes to express its support for President-elect Trump's nomination of Doug Burgum as Secretary of the Interior. His service as governor of North Dakota makes him highly qualified to lead the Department of the Interior.

The Little Shell Tribe views Governor Burgum as a strong nominee who both values and understands the government-to-government relationship with tribal nations. His work as governor of North Dakota has prepared him for the complex interactions among tribal, state, private, and federal stakeholders, which informs our shared values of responsible land and natural resource management and the federal government's trust and treaty obligations.

The Department of the Interior would benefit from Governor Burgum's experience as would Indian Country. The Little Shell Tribal Council respectfully requests your support for his nomination as Secretary of the Interior.

Sincerely,

Gerald Gray

Gerald Gray
Chairman, Little Shell Tribe

cc: The Honorable Troy Downing, U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Ryan Zinke, U.S. House of Representatives

Little Shell Tribal Office • 511 Central Ave West • Great Falls, MT 59404
406.315.2400

Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project
 2327 Lincoln Avenue SE
 Sidney, MT 59270
 Phone: 406-433-1306
lyip@midrivers.com
 FAX 406-433-9188



January 12, 2025

Senator John Thune
 Majority Leader
 U.S. Senate
 Washington, DC 20515

Senator Mike Lee
 Chairman
 Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 U.S. Senate
 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Thune and Chairman Lee,

On behalf of Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Districts 1 and 2 (LYID), Savage Irrigation District, & Intake Irrigation District, I am writing to express our strong support for the confirmation of Governor Doug Burgum as the next Secretary of the Department of the Interior. Governor Burgum has been a steadfast and knowledgeable advocate for agriculture and irrigation in Western North Dakota and Eastern Montana, and his leadership will greatly benefit the Department and the Nation.

The Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project provides water to approximately 59,000 acres of farmland in Montana and North Dakota, supporting over 500 large farms and many smaller operations. This project ensures the viability of important cash crops like wheat, alfalfa, corn, barley, soy beans, and pulse crops, while sustaining local wildlife and riparian habitats. Governor Burgum's understanding of the critical balance between agriculture and environmental stewardship has been instrumental in addressing the challenges posed by the Endangered Species Act.

Governor Burgum's support for the Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project and its ongoing improvements, such as the successful completion of the fish bypass channel at Intake Diversion Dam, demonstrates his commitment to ensuring agriculture and conservation coexist. His leadership helped facilitate collaboration among federal, state, and local stakeholders to protect the endangered pallid sturgeon while maintaining the viability of the irrigation project. This practical, solutions-oriented approach is exactly what is needed at the Department of the Interior.

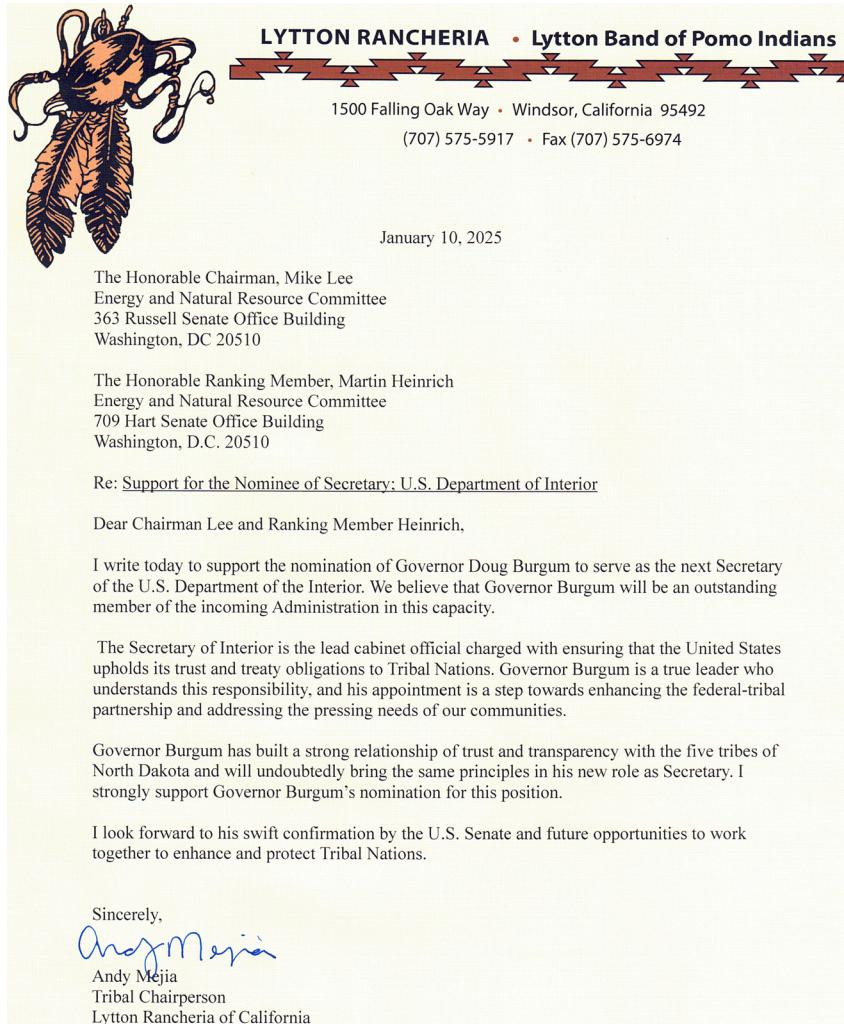
As a champion for rural communities, Governor Burgum has consistently defended farmers and advocated for responsible land and water management policies. His deep understanding of how federal regulations impact agriculture, his ability to balance conservation with economic prosperity, and his strong success at managing the state of North Dakota, make him uniquely qualified to lead the Department of the Interior.

We urge you to confirm Governor Doug Burgum as Secretary of the Interior. His leadership, vision, and commitment to common-sense governance will serve the Department and the Nation with distinction.

Sincerely,



James W. Brower
 Project Manager
 Lower Yellowstone Irrigation Project
 Lower Yellowstone Irrigation District 1 Montana
 Lower Yellowstone Irrigation District 2 North Dakota
 Savage Irrigation District & Intake Irrigation District



**Mashantucket Pequot
Tribal Nation**



TRIBAL COUNCIL

VIA EMAIL ONLY

January 21, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the Nomination of Governor Doug Burgum as Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

On behalf of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation, I write today to express support for the nomination of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. I am pleased that Governor Burgum has been asked to serve the Trump Administration in this capacity.

The Secretary of the Interior leads the federal agency with direct jurisdiction over many programs critical to Indian country and has a seminal role in ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribal Nations. It is critical that next Secretary of the Interior understands these duties, and will direct Interior to take meaningful actions in support tribal sovereignty and self-determination. I am confident that Governor Burgum is committed to serving the Trump Administration and Tribal Nations as that kind of leader for the Department of the Interior.

Governor Burgum has built a strong relationship of trust and transparency with the Tribal Nations in North Dakota based on principles of mutual respect, open communication, and collaboration. I believe he will employ these same principles when engaging with Tribal Nations as Secretary. I look forward to his swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

Sincerely,

Rodney Butler
Rodney Butler
Chairman



MENOMINEE INDIAN TRIBE OF WISCONSIN

CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE

P.O. Box 910
Keshena, WI 54135-0910

January 13, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the nominee of Secretary; U.S. Department of the Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

I write today in support of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. I am pleased to see his nomination to serve the incoming Administration in this capacity.

The Secretary of the Interior is the lead cabinet official charged with ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty obligations to Tribal nations. Governor Burgum is a proven leader who understands this responsibility, and his appointment is a step towards enhancing the federal-tribal partnership and addressing the pressing needs of our communities.

We understand that Governor Burgum has built a strong relationship of trust and transparency with the five tribes of North Dakota and will undoubtedly bring the same principles in his new role as Secretary. I strongly support Governor Burgum's nomination for this position.

I look forward to his swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate and future opportunities to work together to enhance and protect Tribal Nations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gena Kakkak'.

Gena Kakkak
Chairwoman
Menominee Tribal Legislature

MOAPA BAND OF PAIUTES

MOAPA RIVER INDIAN RESERVATION
 BOX 340
 MOAPA, NEVADA 89025
 TELEPHONE (702) 865-2787
 FAX (702) 865-2875

January 13, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman
 Energy and Natural Resource Committee
 363 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member
 Energy and Natural Resource Committee
 709 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the nominee of Secretary; U.S. Department of Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking member Heinrich

I write today in support of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. I am thrilled at his nomination to serve the incoming Administration in this capacity.

The Secretary of Interior is the lead cabinet official charged with ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty responsibility with Tribal nations, he not only understands this relationship and duty, but will put actions to words.

Governor Burgum has built a strong relationship of trust and transparency with the five tribes of North Dakota. Governor Burgum will undoubtedly bring the same principles in his new role as Secretary. We can think of no one better for this job than Governor Burgum and look forward to his swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

Sincerely,



Mario Monroe
 Chairman
 Moapa Band of Paiute Indians



January 14, 2025

Senator John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Mike Lee
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Thune and Chairman Lee,

On behalf of the Montana Trappers Association (MTA), I am pleased to express our strong support for the confirmation of Governor Doug Burgum as the next Secretary of the Department of the Interior. Governor Burgum's lifelong dedication to outdoor traditions, public land access, and conservation principles makes him an outstanding choice for this critical role.

As a lifelong outdoorsman, hunter, and advocate for the rights of sportsmen and women, Governor Burgum deeply understands the integral role of responsible wildlife management, including trapping, in conservation. His leadership has consistently championed the balance between economic development and the preservation of our natural resources, ensuring the sustainability of wildlife habitats and public land access for future generations.

Trapping is a cornerstone of effective wildlife management, predator control, and conservation efforts. It plays a vital role in protecting native species, reducing human-wildlife conflicts, and supporting agriculture and family farms. Governor Burgum's experience and advocacy align with the MTA's mission to promote ethical trapping practices, sustainable wildlife management, and the cultural traditions of trapping in Montana.

Governor Burgum's record demonstrates his ability to bring diverse stakeholders together, foster collaboration, and implement practical solutions. His approach to managing lands and resources is rooted in respect for public access, private property rights, and the traditions that define the American outdoors. His confirmation will ensure the Department of the Interior is guided by a balanced and thoughtful vision.

We respectfully urge you to confirm Governor Doug Burgum as Secretary of the Interior. His leadership will serve our nation's lands, wildlife, and outdoor heritage well.

Sincerely,

Matt Lumley

Matt Lumley
President
Montana Trappers Association

January 15, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on
Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on
Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

The undersigned associations from the forestry and wood products sector support Governor Douglas James Burgum's nomination to be the next Secretary of the Interior. We urge due consideration and subsequent reporting of his nomination by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and confirmation by the full Senate.

More than one-third of the United States is covered by forests, and 47% of U.S. forests, approximately 360 million acres, are private working forests owned by families, small and large businesses, Tribes, and investors who are often seeking to simultaneously maximize economic returns and environmental benefits. Healthy markets for forest products provide clean air and water, wildlife habitat, and jobs. The forestry and wood products sector supports \$288 billion in sales and manufacturing, 2.5 million jobs, and accounts for approximately 5% of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP.

Addressing the challenges facing U.S. forests requires collaboration between federal agencies, private landowners, and the forestry and wood products sector. Through innovative, nationally recognized partnerships like the Wildlife Conservation Initiative, we are already partnering with federal and state agencies to advance species conservation on private lands. Private forest owners are also working alongside Federal agencies on fire suppression and fuel break construction across landscapes and shared boundaries. This "all hands, all lands" approach maximizes efficiency as we seek to address the wildfire crisis together. We believe Governor Burgum's leadership will help to build on these existing collaborative efforts and further secure the health of America's forests and the communities that rely on them.

As the governor of North Dakota, Doug Burgum brings valuable experience navigating western natural resources issues. With over 1.7 million acres of Federal land in a state rooted in agriculture and energy production, he understands the importance of effective land stewardship, coordination across ownerships, wildfire prevention, wildlife conservation, and rural communities. His proven ability to collaborate across agencies and jurisdictions to balance the productivity of working lands with the conservation of natural landscapes and wildlife makes him an excellent choice to lead the Department of the Interior. With his leadership, the Department will deliver on its mission to manage natural resources for the benefit of people, communities, and the environment.

We urge the Committee to support Governor Burgum's nomination and call on the full Senate to confirm him as Secretary of the Interior. His confirmation will enable the implementation of policies and programs that support sustainable forest management, prevent damage from

wildfires, and conserve imperiled wildlife. We look forward to working with Governor Burgum, in his role as Secretary, to promote the health and prosperity of America's forests and the rural communities across the country.

Sincerely,

National Alliance of Forest Owners
American Wood Council
Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association
Forest Resources Association
Federal Forest Resources Coalition
Forest Landowners Association
The Hardwood Federation
National Wooden Pallet & Container Association
National Association of State Foresters
The National Wild Turkey Federation
American Forest Foundation

cc: Honorable John Thune
Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Honorable Kevin Cramer
Honorable John Hoeven



Rich Nolan
President & CEO

January 13, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Senate Committee on Energy and
Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Energy and
Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

As President and CEO of the National Mining Association (NMA), I want to express NMA's support for Governor Doug Burgum's nomination to serve as Secretary of the Interior. Governor Burgum's leadership will be crucial in advancing energy independence, regulatory reform, and collaborative resource stewardship.

The NMA is the only national trade organization that serves as the voice of the U.S. mining industry and the hundreds of thousands of American workers it employs before Congress, the federal agencies, the judiciary, and the media, advocating for public policies that will help America fully and responsibly utilize its vast natural resources. We work to ensure America has secure and reliable supply chains, abundant and affordable energy, and the American-sourced materials necessary for U.S. manufacturing, national security, and economic security, all delivered under world-leading environmental, safety, and labor standards. The NMA has a membership of more than 280 companies and organizations involved in every aspect of mining, from producers and equipment manufacturers to service providers.

Governor Burgum's track record as Governor of North Dakota demonstrates his ability to address complex challenges, foster innovative solutions, and champion responsible resource development. During his time in office, he positioned North Dakota as a national leader in energy and mineral production, streamlined regulatory processes, and strengthened partnerships with tribal communities. His experience managing public lands as Chairman of the North Dakota Land Board underscores his ability to bring diverse stakeholders together to create consensus-based solutions that balance development with conservation.

We are confident that Governor Burgum will serve with distinction as Secretary of the Interior. His leadership reflects a thoughtful and collaborative approach rooted in a deep commitment to stewardship and practical solutions—qualities that will greatly benefit the Department and the nation.



Doug Burgum Support Letter
January 13, 2025
Page 2

I respectfully urge the Committee to approve Governor Burgum's nomination and move it forward without delay. We look forward to supporting the Committee throughout this important confirmation process.

Sincerely,



Rich Nolan





Jim Matheson

January 14, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman
 Senate Committee on Energy and Natural
 Resources
 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member
 Senate Committee on Energy and Natural
 Resources
 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

On behalf of the nearly 900 not-for-profit electric cooperative members of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), I write to express NRECA's support for Doug Burgum to serve as Secretary of the Interior.

America's electric cooperatives comprise a unique sector of the electric industry. These not-for-profit entities are independently owned and governed by the people they serve. From growing urban regions to remote farming communities, electric cooperatives provide power to 42 million Americans across 48 states.

A close friend to North Dakota's electric cooperatives during his tenure as governor, Doug Burgum has long recognized the importance of domestic energy development and has been a strong supporter for the advancement of Carbon Capture and Utilization and other new technologies. He has championed a common-sense regulatory philosophy and has a record of focusing on innovation to address challenges and create opportunities.

NRECA has had a longstanding relationship with DOI and we look forward to working with Mr. Burgum to prioritize programs that ensure the ability of electric cooperatives to supply affordable, reliable, and safe electricity to their consumer-members. Because electric cooperatives serve 56% of our nation's landmass, our members necessarily operate on more public lands and critical habitat than any other type of utility. As a result, electric cooperatives have increased exposure to wildfires. Burdensome and costly government regulations have been a challenge for electric cooperatives as they have focused on right-of-way operations, maintenance, and wildfire mitigation activities.

At a time when we need more electric generation to meet increasing demand, and more access to technology and infrastructure to combat threats of wildfire, dam removal, and unrealistic regulatory hurdles, electric cooperatives are eager to partner with Doug Burgum as he advances his approach of "Innovation over Regulation." Working to resolve and address bureaucratic challenges within DOI's land and species management agencies is a key priority for our members and is critical to electric reliability.

NRECA is proud to support Doug Burgum's nomination as DOI Secretary and his appointment to lead the National Energy Council. I urge the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the full Senate to swiftly approve his nomination and look forward to working with him to advance U.S. energy security.

Sincerely,



Jim Matheson
CEO, NRECA



NATIONAL STONE, SAND
& GRAVEL ASSOCIATION

January 14, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chair
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources U.S.
Senate
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Lee and Heinrich,

As the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources prepares to vote on former Governor Doug Burgum's nomination, as Secretary of the Interior, the National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association (NSSGA) would like to express our unwavering support for his confirmation.

As a distinguished governor, Mr. Burgum understands how energy and environmental policy impact different regions of the country. Under his leadership, North Dakota is a leader in innovation, creating an economic boom for the energy, agriculture and technology sectors. His understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the aggregates industry will enable him to effectively address the most pressing issues facing our nation's critical infrastructure and supply chain. His vision for the Department of the Interior aligns with our goals. Environmental laws and regulations should be based on sound scientific, engineering and medical research on established scientific, engineering and medical principles.

NSSGA represents stone, sand and gravel producers who are responsible for the essential raw materials found in every building, road, bridge and public works project. NSSGA looks forward to working with a Secretary of the Interior who understands the harmful repercussions of overregulation. NSSGA members believe that wise environmental stewardship is good business. Aggregates operations around the country recognize that the Earth's resources, upon which all life depends, are finite. Wise environmental stewardship is necessary today to preserve the potential for a quality life for future generations.

We respectfully urge you to confirm Doug Burgum as the next Secretary of the Interior. Thank you for considering our position. Please contact me if you have any questions or would like any additional information.

Sincerely,

Michele Stanley
Interim CEO
National Stone, Sand & Gravel Association





January 15, 2025

Senator John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Mike Lee
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Thune and Chairman Lee,

On behalf of the National Trappers Association (NTA), I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for the confirmation of Governor Doug Burgum as the next Secretary of the Department of the Interior. Governor Burgum's lifelong dedication to conservation, responsible land management, and his steadfast commitment to preserving public land access make him an exceptional choice for this critical role.

The National Trappers Association, with chapters in all 50 states, represents thousands of trappers across the nation who are committed to the ethical harvest of furbearing mammals and the preservation and enhancement of their habitats. Our members work in partnership with wildlife managers to promote sound conservation practices and ensure that trapping remains an effective tool for wildlife management.

Trapping plays a vital role in predator control, wildlife population management, and the prevention of damage to agriculture and infrastructure. It helps mitigate human-wildlife conflicts, reduces the spread of diseases such as rabies and tularemia, and provides critical data for wildlife research. Governor Burgum understands the importance of these practices and has a proven record of balancing economic development with conservation efforts.

As a lifelong outdoorsman and staunch advocate for public access to lands, Governor Burgum embodies the values and principles that guide the NTA's mission. His leadership and commitment to collaboration will ensure that our nation's natural resources are managed responsibly, preserving opportunities for trappers, hunters, and outdoor enthusiasts for generations to come.

We urge you to confirm Governor Doug Burgum as Secretary of the Interior. His leadership and vision will bring balance and integrity to the management of our nation's lands and waters.

Sincerely,

John Daniel
John Daniel
President
National Trappers Association



January 15, 2025
 The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman
 United States Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 363 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member
 United States Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 709 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the Nomination of Governor Doug Burgum as Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich;

The mission of the National Tribal Energy Association (NTEA) is to support the safe, efficient, practical, sustainable, and environmentally sound management and monetization of our Tribal Nation's energy and mineral wealth. We support Tribal goals of stewardship of this wealth by balancing social, environmental, and commercial considerations. We utilize the tools of social, environmental, and commercial responsibility in the realm of policy and regulations that match the unique aspects of Tribal governments, our people, and sovereignty.

We write today in support of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior. As the lead Cabinet Secretary charged with ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty responsibilities in regard to Tribal Nations, he not only understands this relationship and duty, but will put action to words on our behalf and in partnership with Tribes. Governor Burgum has built a strong relationship of trust and transparency with the Tribes of North Dakota. He will undoubtedly bring the same principles to his new role as Secretary. We can think of no one better suited for this job and look forward to his swift confirmation by the United States Senate.

Sincerely,

Daniel Cardenas
 CEO, Chairman, and Co-Founder



GROWING TRIBAL ECONOMIES. STRENGTHENING TRIBAL FINANCE.
1101 30TH STREET, NW, SUITE 500 • WASHINGTON, DC

Via Email

January 24, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Committee on Energy & Natural Resources
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy & Natural Resources
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the Nomination of Governor Doug Burgum as Secretary of the United States
Department of the Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

On behalf of NAFOA's Board of Directors, we write this letter to express support for the nomination of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior.

The United States Department of the Interior is a cornerstone in maintaining the federal government's trust responsibility to federally recognized Tribes. The Secretary is entrusted with safeguarding the tenets of Tribal sovereignty, managing Tribal lands held in trust, overseeing natural resource development on Tribal lands, and administering federal programs for Tribal education, social services, and economic development through the Bureau of Indian Affairs. They must regularly consult with Tribal leaders on policies impacting their Tribal citizens and communities and ensure compliance with treaties and federal Indian law.



GROWING TRIBAL ECONOMIES. STRENGTHENING TRIBAL FINANCE.
1101 30TH STREET, NW, SUITE 500 • WASHINGTON, DC

At NAFOA, founded as the Native American Finance Officers Association, we are committed to growing Tribal economies and strengthening Tribal finance. This mission aligns with the Trump Administration's vision for a strong and respected national economy rooted in sensible tax policy, easing overregulation, and helping working families succeed.

We commend nominee Doug Burgum for building a strong and respectful relationship with the Tribal Nations of North Dakota during his tenure as Governor. We are confident that Governor Burgum will apply the same principles of relationship-building, centered on trust and transparency, to his new role as Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior in the Trump Administration. We look forward to his swift confirmation by the United States Senate.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rodney Butler".

Rodney Butler

President of the Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cory M. Blankenship".

Cory M. Blankenship

Executive Director



The Navajo Nation DR. BUU NYGREN PRESIDENT
 Yideeskádi Nitsáhákees | *Think for the Future*

January 10, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman
 Energy and Natural Resource Committee
 363 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member
 Energy and Natural Resource Committee
 709 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

On behalf of the Navajo Nation, I write to express support for the confirmation of North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum as the next Secretary of the Interior. This critical position is charged with upholding trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribal Nations, managing the vast majority of federal lands, and overseeing policies that shape energy development, conservation, and tribal self-determination. Governor Burgum's leadership record demonstrates his commitment to fostering meaningful partnerships with Tribal Nations and addressing shared priorities through collaboration and mutual respect.

As Governor of North Dakota, Governor Burgum exemplified a proactive and solution-oriented approach to strengthening government-to-government relationships with tribes in his state. He championed equitable tax-sharing agreements, worked to ensure tribal voices were represented in state-level decision-making, and supported cooperative law enforcement initiatives that improved public safety for tribal and surrounding communities alike. These actions reflect a deep understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities facing Indian Country and a willingness to work tirelessly to advance tribal sovereignty and treaty rights.

The Navajo Nation faces pressing challenges that require the Department's leadership and collaboration, including advancing energy sovereignty, ensuring access to clean drinking water, and addressing the impacts of climate change on our lands and communities. Governor Burgum has shown that he is ready to roll up his sleeves and implement policies that empower tribal nations to achieve their goals and realize their visions for the future. The Navajo Nation stands ready to work with Governor Burgum in his new role as Secretary of the Interior. I urge the United States Senate to act swiftly in confirming Governor Doug Burgum as the next Secretary of the Interior.

If you have any questions please contact Mr. Justin Ahasteen, Executive Director of the Navajo Nation Washington Office at (202) 682-7390 or by email at jahasteen@nnwo.org. *Ahéheeé* (Thank you).

Sincerely,

Dr. Buu Nygren, President
THE NAVAJO NATION

Representative Chip Neiman
 Speaker of the House
 Wyoming House of Representatives House District 01



address P.O. Box 116 • Hulett, WY 82720
 mobile (307) 290-0366
 email Chip.Neiman@wyoleg.gov

January 21, 2025

US Senator Mike Lee
 Chair of US Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee
 US Senator Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member of US Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
 United States Senate
 304 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

We, the undersigned members of Wyoming's legislative leadership, write to express our strong support for the confirmation of Governor Doug Burgum as Secretary of the United States Department of Interior. As elected officials who are deeply committed to the values and prosperity of the United States and our state, we believe that Gov. Burgum's private sector and government experience, proven track record, and unwavering dedication to the ideals of America make him an exemplary candidate for Secretary of the Interior and we ask you support his confirmation.

Throughout his tenure as Governor of North Dakota, Mr. Burgum demonstrated a remarkable ability to drive economic growth, foster innovation, and implement policies that benefit all citizens. His commitment to fiscal responsibility and forward-thinking approach to the administration of government, has resulted in significant advancements in technology, education, and infrastructure in his home state. These achievements are a testament to his capability to lead such a large and significant federal agency. We believe he will create efficiencies to drive the wise stewardship of our Nation's lands.

Gov. Burgum's background as a successful entrepreneur and business leader further underscores his qualifications. His understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing our economy, particularly in the energy and technology sectors, positions him

uniquely to contribute to the development of sound policies that will enhance America's competitiveness and security.

Wyoming is home to a vast amount of federal lands. These lands play a crucial role in our Nation's economy and way of life. Energy from Wyoming has powered America for decades and natural resources like timber and critical minerals can be used to build more economic growth. That is why effective management of federal lands is essential for America's livelihood. Gov. Burgum's experience and commitment to responsible land management make him well-suited to oversee these important areas. His leadership will ensure that these lands are managed in a way that benefits the communities that depend on them and all other Americans.

Wyoming is also a leader in producing energy and developing natural resources. Our state is at the forefront of the production of coal, oil, natural gas, and renewable energy sources. Gov. Burgum's deep understanding of the energy sector and his proven track record of supporting responsible resource development will be invaluable in promoting policies that support economic growth and energy independence.

Gov. Burgum has shown he can achieve meaningful results. His inclusive leadership style and commitment to listening to different perspectives ensure that he will serve all Americans with integrity and fairness. We are confident that Gov. Burgum will bring the same level of excellence and dedication to the Interior Department. His leadership will undoubtedly contribute to the continued prosperity and well-being of our nation.

We respectfully urge you to support Governor Doug Burgum's confirmation and look forward to the positive impact he will have in this critical role.

Sincerely,



House Speaker Chip Neiman



House Floor Majority Leader Scott Heiner



House Speaker Pro Tempore
Jeremy Haroldson

House Majority Whip Ocean Andrews



LAWRENCE G. KEANE
 SVP Gov't & Public Affairs, Assist. Secretary and General Counsel
lkeane@nssf.org | 202-220-1340 x 249 | nssf.org
 400 N. Capitol Street NW, Suite 475, Washington, D.C. 20001

January 17, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman
 Senate Energy and Natural Resources
 Committee
 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member
 Senate Energy and Natural Resources
 Committee
 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

NSSF® is the trade association for the firearm, ammunition, hunting and shooting sports industry. NSSF's mission is to promote, protect and preserve hunting and the shooting sports. On behalf of our more than 10,500 member companies nationwide, I write in support of the nomination of Douglas James Burgum, of North Dakota, to serve as the 55th United States Secretary of the Department of the Interior and urge his swift confirmation.

Not only is Governor Burgum an avid hunter and angler, he is a recognized leader in the ongoing fight to protect and preserve our nation's rich sporting heritage. He understands that sportsmen and women are the greatest conservationists, as evidenced by the policies he's enacted as Governor. Working with the legislature, he has led the charge to welcome North Dakotans into the hunting community and has helped grow the next generation of sportsmen and women.

We wholeheartedly agree with Governor Burgum when he stated at his nomination hearing that "you cannot separate hunting from the love of outdoors, respect for wildlife, and dollars that flow back into habitat." The firearm and ammunition industry is proud to be at the forefront of wildlife conservation. Each time a recreational shooter or hunter purchases a firearm or ammunition, they are helping to support wildlife conservation through the excise taxes paid by our industry on the sale of those products. This is why the American funding model is recognized globally as the gold standard for sustainable conservation and wildlife management.

In this position, he will be tasked with overseeing the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Land Management. Based on his record, we are confident that he will pursue a federal land use and management framework that maximizes access without compromising the nation's world class conservation record. We also believe Governor Burgum will take an evidence-based approach to decision making that emphasizes the use of the best available science and data.



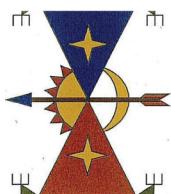
LAWRENCE G. KEANE
SVP Gov't & Public Affairs, Assist. Secretary and General Counsel
keane@nssf.org | 202-220-1340 x 249 | nssf.org
400 N. Capitol Street NW, Suite 475, Washington, D.C. 20001

America's sportsmen and women have found in Governor Burgum a true ally, and we are proud to offer our strong support. We respectfully request you confirm Governor Burgum for Secretary of the Interior. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lawrence G. Keane".

Lawrence G. Keane



Oglala Sioux Tribe

P.O. Box 2070, Pine Ridge, S.D. 57770
 Direct: 605-867-8420 - Cell Phone: 605-407-7427
 Fax: 605-867-6076
 E-mail: fstarcomesout@oglala.org



Office the President
 Frank Star Comes Out

January 27, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman
 Energy and Natural Resource Committee
 363 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member
 Energy and Natural Resource Committee
 709 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for Governor Doug Burgum for the position of Secretary of the United States
 Department of the Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

I write today in support of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior. I believe he has the background and capability to serve well in the position of Secretary, especially when it comes to the Department's role in the United States' government-to-government relationship with Tribal Nations.

The Oglala Sioux Tribe is a constituent Tribe of the Great Sioux Nation, also known as the Oceti Sakowin or Seven Council Fires. Our Pine Ridge Indian Reservation covers approximately 3 million acres (roughly the size of Connecticut) and our Tribe has more than 52,000 enrolled citizens, making us one of the largest Tribes in the country, both by land and by population. Our treaty rights, the United States' obligations to us, and our unique political relationship with the United States are set forth in a series of treaties, including the 1825 Treaty with the Sioune and Oglala Tribes, the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 (11 Stat. 749) and the 1868 Sioux Nation Treaty (15 Stat. 635). These treaties remain in effect today and are the Supreme Law of the Land.

While the United States' treaty obligations and trust responsibility to Tribal Nations are duties of the United States as a whole, the Secretary of Interior has historically been the lead cabinet official charged with ensuring that the United States carries out these duties of paramount importance. In his role as Governor of North Dakota, Governor Burgum built a relationship of trust and transparency with the five Tribal Nations of North Dakota. As Governor, and as a native North Dakotan, he is experienced in the concepts, significance, and exercise of tribal sovereignty,

January 27, 2025
Page 2

tribal self-determination, and tribal consultation. He is also knowledgeable about the vast needs of Tribal Nations, especially those of the large-land based tribes, like ours which is similar to those in his home state of North Dakota.

I believe Governor Burgum will bring the principles he embraced and the lessons he learned from working with the Tribal Nations in North Dakota to forge good relations with them to the position of Secretary of Interior to forge good relations with and advance Tribal Nations throughout the United States. Thus, I support Governor Burgum to become the next Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior. I look forward to his swift confirmation by the United States Senate and future opportunities to work with him to enhance and protect our Tribe and others throughout the country.

Sincerely,



Frank Star Comes Out
President

cc: Senator John Thune
Senator Mike Rounds



January 13, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman
 Energy and Natural Resource Committee
 363 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member
 Energy and Natural Resource Committee
 709 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the nominee of Secretary, U.S. Department of Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking member Heinrich

I write today in support of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. We are very excited about his nomination to serve the incoming Administration in this capacity.

The Secretary of Interior is the lead cabinet official charged with ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty responsibility with Tribal nations, he not only understands this relationship and duty, but will put actions to words.

Governor Burgum has built a strong relationship of trust and transparency with the five tribes of North Dakota. Governor Burgum will undoubtedly bring the same principles in his new role as Secretary. We can think of no one better for this job than Governor Burgum and look forward to his swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

Sincerely,

Geoffrey M. Standing Bear
 Geoffrey M. Standing Bear
 Principal Chief, Osage Nation
 Email: gstandingbear@osagenation-nsn.gov

GMS/sld

627 Grandview * Pawhuska, Oklahoma 74056
 Telephone 918-287-5555 * Fax 918-287-5562



January 13, 2025

Senator John Thune
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Mike Lee
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Thune and Chairman Lee,

On behalf of the Outdoor Heritage Coalition (OHC), I am writing to express our enthusiastic support for the confirmation of Governor Doug Burgum as the next Secretary of the Department of the Interior. Governor Burgum's lifelong dedication to conservation, responsible land management, and his steadfast commitment to preserving public land access make him an ideal candidate for this role.

The Outdoor Heritage Coalition is the fastest-growing grassroots conservation organization in the western United States, representing over 25,000 dedicated members. OHC has become a leading voice for America's sportsmen and landowners, standing at the forefront of efforts to protect public access, advocate for sustainable land management, and defend the traditions that define our outdoor heritage.

As a lifelong hunter and a staunch advocate for the Second Amendment, Governor Burgum deeply understands the values and traditions of America's outdoorsmen and women. His leadership in North Dakota has consistently balanced economic development with conservation priorities. He has been a champion of common-sense implementation of the Endangered Species Act, ensuring that critical habitats are protected while allowing for responsible resource use.

Governor Burgum's record demonstrates his ability to bring stakeholders together to address complex challenges. As Chairman of the North Dakota Land Board, he has worked tirelessly to ensure public access to lands while supporting private property rights and fostering sustainable land use practices. His approach prioritizes collaboration, practical solutions, and respect for the interests of all parties involved.

Governor Burgum embodies the principles that drive OHC's mission: enhancing public land access, promoting outdoor traditions, and ensuring thoughtful management of our nation's vast resources. His confirmation as Secretary of the Interior will bring a much-needed balance of vision, leadership, and dedication to the responsible management of America's lands and waters.

We urge you to confirm Governor Doug Burgum as Secretary of the Interior. His exceptional leadership will serve the Department and our country well.

Sincerely,
Kris Killorn
 Kris Killorn
 President
 Outdoor Heritage Coalition



The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman
 Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 304 Dirksen Senate Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member
 Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 304 Dirksen Senate Building
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

On behalf of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR), we express our strong support for the nomination of Governor Doug Burgum to be the next Secretary of the Department of the Interior.

Governor Burgum's history of support for outdoor recreation, the outdoor recreation economy, and the protection of public lands and waters makes his leadership critical for the Administration and the Department. We have appreciated working with the Governor and his staff, especially in his announcement last year to create a North Dakota Office of Outdoor Recreation. Governor Burgum has shown a commitment to supporting outdoor recreation as an economic driver and a meaningful way to connect communities. As an avid outdoorsman who hunts, snowmobiles, sails, skis, rides horses, side by sides and more, we are hopeful that the Governor's long-time admiration of Teddy Roosevelt, sophisticated understanding of business, and commitment to public-private partnerships will help support and grow the recreation economy, its adjacent sectors, and all who benefit from it in every corner of the country.

ORR is the nation's leading coalition of outdoor recreation associations representing the more than 110,000 outdoor businesses in the recreation economy and the full spectrum of outdoor-related activities. The most recent data from the U.S. Department of Commerce shows that outdoor recreation generated \$1.2 trillion and 5 million American jobs in 2023, comprising 2.3% of the nation's economy and 3.1% of all employees in the country.

The demands and impacts on our public lands and waters are growing, including increased visitation, infrastructure needs, maintenance backlogs, and the impact of extreme weather and natural disasters. Innovative solutions are needed to manage the many challenges facing our public lands and waters and Governor Burgum is positioned to help lead that effort alongside Congressional partners and ORR members.

We appreciate the longstanding tradition at the Department of the Interior to support recreation and the growth of more opportunities for everyone to access the outdoors and the many activities that make up our sector. Along with Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee members, our businesses and associations have strongly supported the Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences (EXPLORE) Act, which was recently signed into law. This law will create a pathway to modernizing the Department's policies around outdoor recreation access, infrastructure, permitting, and many other areas that intersect with outdoor recreation. We appreciate the Committee's leadership on this initiative and look forward to working with Governor Burgum and his team on implementing this historic law.

There are also significant policy issues on the horizon, which will ultimately be informed by the next Secretary of the Interior and considered by your Committee, including the reauthorization of the Legacy Restoration Fund. We have appreciated a strong bipartisan relationship with this Committee on legislative matters addressing outdoor recreation and we are confident the same will be true with the next Secretary of the Interior. Ensuring the right policies are in place will support our industry, that grows faster than the national economy and positively impacts local communities and people throughout the country.



The success of the \$1.2 trillion outdoor recreation economy relies on the Department of the Interior managing, safeguarding, and maintaining America's public lands and waters, infrastructure, and increasing access so we can pass on the lifelong benefits of time in nature to our children and all future generations. ORR will seek to work diligently with the next Administration to advance a sustainable and thriving outdoor recreation economy for the benefit of all Americans. We appreciate the opportunity to highlight our support for Governor Burgum's nomination and look forward to working with you and your staff in the 119th Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jessica Wahl Turner'.

Jessica Wahl Turner, President, Outdoor Recreation Roundtable
 American Bus Association
 American Horse Council
 American Prairie
 American Sportfishing Association
 Archery Trade Association
 Boat U.S.
 CHM Government Services
 Diving Equipment & Marketing Association
 Eddyline Kayaks
 International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association
 Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
 Motorcycle Industry Council
 National Forest Recreation Association
 National Marine Manufacturers Association
 National Park Hospitality Association
 National Ski Areas Association
 National Wild Turkey Federation
 Outdoor Hospitality Industry
 Outdoor Industry Association
 Outdoor Writers Association of America
 Paddlesports Trade Coalition
 PeopleForBikes
 Professional TrailBuilders Association
 Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association
 REI Co-op
 RV Dealers Association
 RV Industry Association
 Society of Outdoor Recreation Professionals
 Specialty Equipment Market Association
 Specialty Vehicle Institute of America
 Sports & Fitness Industry Association
 The Corps Network



**PALA BAND OF
MISSION INDIANS**

PMB 50, 35008 Pala Temecula Road
Pala, CA 92059
Phone 760-891-3500 | Fax 760-742-1411

January 10, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the nominee of Secretary; U.S. Department of Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking member Heinrich,

I write today in support of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. We are very excited about his nomination to serve the incoming Administration in this capacity.

The Secretary of Interior is the lead cabinet official charged with ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty responsibility with Tribal nations, he not only understands this relationship and duty, but will put actions to words.

Governor Burgum has built a strong relationship of trust and transparency with the five tribes of North Dakota. Governor Burgum will undoubtedly bring the same principles in his new role as Secretary. We can think of no one better for this job than Governor Burgum and look forward to his swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

Sincerely,

Robert Smith, Chairman
Pala Band of Mission Indians

PASCUA YAQUI TRIBE
OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN

January 10, 2025



The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the nominee of Secretary; U.S. Department of Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

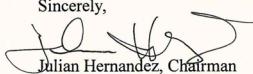
I write today as the Chairman of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe of Arizona (Tribe) to support Governor Doug Burgum's nomination to serve as the next Secretary of the Department of the Interior. Governor Burgum is an excellent choice to lead the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which, as you know, is responsible for implementing a complex array of federal laws and policies related to Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

Governor Burgum's actions tell us all we need to know about his qualifications to serve as our next Secretary of the Interior. After taking office in 2016, Governor Burgum worked swiftly to improve the state's abysmal relationship with North Dakota's five Tribes through a concerted effort to meet with Tribes and understand their concerns and points of view. He has also acted as a convening force between state and local governments and North Dakota's Tribes on a wide variety of important issues, including law enforcement, economic development, natural resources, taxes, and other matters.

The Tribe believes Governor Burgum's experience and commitment to Tribal collaboration will translate successfully to his new role as the Secretary of the Interior. In the coming years, the United States and Indian Country will need to work closely together to address critical issues for our citizens, such as the need to provide certainty for Indian water rights, increase economic opportunity on Tribal lands, preserve cultural resources, and ensure that the United States' longstanding treaty and trust obligations are fulfilled. Governor Burgum can be trusted to meet these challenges head on and to find solutions that will work for Indian Country and for our neighboring communities and other stakeholders.

Accordingly, the Pascua Yaqui Tribe is honored to urge Governor Burgum's swift confirmation in Congress.

Sincerely,


Julian Hernandez, Chairman

7474 S. Camino De Oeste • Tucson, Arizona 85757 • Phone (520) 883-5010 • FAX (520) 883-5014
1-888-443-0044



Portland Cement Association
 200 Massachusetts Ave NW, Suite 200
 Washington D.C., 20001
 202.408.9494
www.cement.org

January 16, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman, Energy & Natural Resources
 U.S. Senate
 Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member, Energy & Natural Resources
 U.S. Senate
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

The Portland Cement Association (PCA), which represents cement manufacturers across the country, express its support for the Senate's expedient consideration and approval of the nomination of former North Dakota Governor Doug Burgum to serve as Secretary of the Department of the Interior (DOI).

As you may know, PCA is the premier policy, research, education, and market intelligence organization serving America's cement manufacturers. PCA's members represent the majority of the U.S. cement production capacity and have facilities in all 50 states. Our members manufacture cement, the primary ingredient in concrete, an essential construction material, and a fundamental component of our nation's transportation infrastructure. Cement is used to construct highways, bridges, tunnels, mass transit systems, airports, runways, and sidewalks. Cement and concrete product manufacturing, directly and indirectly, employs approximately 600,000 people across the United States, and our collective industries contribute over \$130 billion to our economy.

DOI has a substantial role in ensuring energy access and reducing regulatory barriers towards increased U.S. energy production. In addition, DOI has a significant regulatory role in implementing the Endangered Species Act, which inhibits domestic energy development, infrastructure construction, and thwarts cement manufacturers from pursuing upgrades and new development at their facilities. As cement is critical to economic growth and a strong quality of life for Americans, the choice of DOI Secretary is critical at this time of global and domestic environmental and economic challenges.

PCA and the cement industry are committed to sustainability, protecting human health & the environment, and maintaining the U.S. cement industry as the global standard. Meeting these goals will require increased energy production and access in the U.S., reducing regulatory barriers towards increased energy production, and implementing facility upgrades. Mr. Burgum, as DOI Secretary and Chair of the newly formed National Energy Council, will be critical for achieving these goals.

As the 119th Congress gets underway, PCA is ready to work with Congress and the Trump Administration on policies critical to our nation's cement manufacturers. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me at soneill@cement.org.

Sincerely,

Sean O'Neill
 Senior Vice President
 Government Affairs

Cc: All members of the U.S. Senate



10 January 2025

PUEBLO OF SANTA ANA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

The Honorable Mike Lee, Chairman
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for Doug Burgum for Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich

The Pueblo of Santa Ana writes in support of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. We are thrilled at his nomination to serve the incoming Administration in this capacity.

The Secretary of Interior is the lead cabinet official charged with ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty obligations to Tribal nations. Governor Burgum has built a strong relationship of trust and transparency with the five tribes of North Dakota and will undoubtedly bring the same principles to his new role as Secretary. We look forward to engaging with him on important issues like natural resource development and the protection of tribal sacred lands.

We urge Governor Burgum's swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate and look forward to working with him on future opportunities to enhance and protect Tribal Nations.

Myron Arrijo
Pueblo of Santa Ana
Myron Arrijo, Governor

Kevin C. Montoya
Pueblo of Santa Ana
Kevin C. Montoya, Lt. Governor

02 DOVE ROAD ♦ SANTA ANA ♦ NM 87004

TEL: 505-771-6700 ♦ FAX: 505-771-6745 ♦ EMAIL: GOV@SANTAANA-NSN.GOV



PUYALLUP TRIBE OF INDIANS

January 16, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman
 Energy and Natural Resource Committee
 363 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member
 Energy and Natural Resource Committee
 709 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the nominee of Secretary; U.S. Department of Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

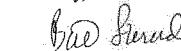
On behalf of the Puyallup Tribe of Washington, I write to support the nomination of Governor Doug Burgum for Secretary of the Department of the Interior. President Trump has nominated an effective leader who not only understands the needs of Indian country but appreciates the uniqueness of working with Indian tribes.

As Governor of North Dakota, Doug Burgum has prioritized engagement with Tribes. He has a proven track record of building and maintaining effective government-to-government relationships between States and Tribes founded on mutual respect and understanding. Governor Burgum has demonstrated that he is willing to listen, engage in meaningful discussions, and explore opportunities to work together. When confronted with disagreement, Governor Burgum works to find common ground and pragmatic solutions. His commitment to Indian tribes is both honorable and appreciated.

Governor Burgum has successfully led the State of North Dakota through a tremendous onslaught of issues, including significant drought, crippling storms, and budget shortfalls. Under his leadership the State of North Dakota has never been stronger. And through it all, he has ensured that Tribes have a seat at the table. As Secretary of the Interior, he will deal with similar complex challenges across the west and throughout Indian country, but his experience ensures that he will be able to immediately tackle those issues upon confirmation.

For all these reasons, the Puyallup Tribe supports the nomination of Governor Doug Burgum to be the next Secretary of the Interior.

Sincerely,


 Bill Sterud, Chairman

3002 Duct Cho St., Tacoma, Washington 98404
 253-573-7800



Craig A. Kirby
President & CEO

January 13, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

The RV Industry Association (RVIA) is pleased to express its strong support for President-elect Trump's nomination of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. This appointment is of critical importance to the RV industry and the broader outdoor recreation community. As the steward of more than 20 percent of the nation's land base—including iconic national parks and public lands that attract nearly half a billion visits annually—the Department's mission and leadership have a profound impact on the American-made RV industry and RVers across the country.

RVIA is the national trade association representing over 500 manufacturers and component and aftermarket suppliers who together build more than 98 percent of all RVs produced in the United States. The RV industry contributes \$140 billion annually to the U.S. economy and supports 680,000 full-time American jobs.

Governor Burgum has long been a steadfast champion of outdoor recreation. In May 2024, he established the North Dakota Office of Outdoor Recreation to enhance industry partnerships and maximize the state's outdoor recreation potential. Under his leadership, North Dakota has demonstrated the economic and social value of outdoor recreation and camping, which contributes significantly to both local economies and the national GDP.

Secretary-designate Burgum will play a leading role in addressing critical challenges and opportunities for outdoor recreation, including the reauthorization of the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund, which is set to expire in 2025. While the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) provided permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), the Legacy Restoration Fund requires reauthorization or extension to continue addressing the significant deferred maintenance and investment needs of our national parks and public lands. The Legacy Restoration Fund is currently supporting hundreds of critical outdoor recreation projects nationwide, improving park infrastructure, creating jobs and boosting local economies. For instance, it has provided a \$21.5 million investment to revitalize Yosemite National Park's largest campground. This project will repair roads, improve accessibility, and update facilities for the more than 150,000 campers who visit annually.

Governor Burgum's record reflects a deep commitment to enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities and prioritizing access to public lands. We appreciate Secretary-designate Burgum's commitment to prioritize investments in outdoor recreation infrastructure, including the modernization and expansion of federal campgrounds to accommodate the growing needs of the vibrant American RV industry.

We look forward to collaborating with Secretary-designate Burgum and the Department of the Interior to advance the outdoor recreation sector, grow U.S. jobs, and safeguard treasured experiences in our great outdoors. His leadership presents a unique opportunity to strengthen public access and ensure that America's outdoor heritage continues to thrive.

Sincerely,



Craig A. Kirby
President & CEO



*San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe
PO Box 2950, Tuba City, AZ 86045
(928) 212-9794 ~ (928) 233-8948 fax*

January 13, 2025

Via U.S. Mail & E-mail to:
The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the Nominee of Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

On behalf of the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe, I am writing to express our support for the nomination of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Governor Burgum's leadership and commitment to fostering collaboration between state governments and Tribal Nations make him an excellent choice to lead the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which plays a critical role in implementing federal laws and policies that impact Native American and Alaska Native communities.

Governor Burgum's record speaks for itself. Since taking office in 2016, he has worked diligently to strengthen the relationship between North Dakota's five Tribes and the state. His proactive approach includes meeting directly with Tribes to understand their concerns, as well as serving as a bridge between state and local governments and Tribes on a wide range of issues, such as law enforcement, economic development, natural resources, taxes, and more. This collaborative approach demonstrates his respect for Tribal sovereignty and his willingness to listen and engage in meaningful dialogue.

<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Johnny Ladd Jr.</i>	<i>Layton Chee</i>	<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Skye Freeman</i>	<i>Louise Tallman</i>	<i>Vacant</i>
<i>President</i>	<i>Vice President</i>	<i>At Large Council</i>	<i>Southern Council</i>	<i>Southern Council</i>	<i>Northern Council</i>	<i>Northern Council</i>

Burgum Support Letter
 January 13, 2025
 Page 2

The San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe believes that Governor Burgum's experience and demonstrated commitment to working with Tribal Nations will be invaluable as he steps into the role of Secretary of the Interior. In the years ahead, it will be crucial for the federal government and Indian Country to work together on pressing issues, including securing Indian water rights, expanding economic opportunities on Tribal lands, protecting cultural resources, and fulfilling the U.S. government's treaty and trust obligations.

We are confident that Governor Burgum is well-equipped to meet these challenges and deliver solutions that benefit both Indian Country and the broader American public. For these reasons, the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe strongly supports Governor Doug Burgum's swift confirmation as the next Secretary of the Interior.

Sincerely,
SAN JUAN SOUTHERN PAIUTE TRIBE

JOHNNY LEHI Jr.
 Johnny Lehi, Jr., Vice President

<i>Vacant</i> President	<i>Johnny Lehi Jr.</i> Vice President	<i>Leyayon Choe</i> At Large Council	<i>Vacant</i> Southern Council	<i>Sylvia Preston</i> Southern Council	<i>Louise Gaffman</i> Northern Council	<i>Vacant</i> Northern Council
----------------------------	--	---	-----------------------------------	---	---	-----------------------------------

SANTA CLARA

POST OFFICE BOX 580
(505) 753-7330
(505) 753-5375 Fax

**INDIAN PUEBLO**

ESPAÑOLA, NEW MEXICO
87532
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR

January 13, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for Doug Burgum for Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich

I write today in support of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. I am thrilled at his nomination to serve the incoming Administration in this capacity.

The Secretary of Interior is the lead cabinet official charged with ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty obligations to Tribal nations. Governor Burgum has built a strong relationship of trust and transparency with the five tribes of North Dakota and will undoubtedly bring the same principles to his new role as Secretary. We look forward to engaging with him on important issues like natural resource development and the protection of tribal sacred lands.

We urge Governor Burgum's swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate and look forward to working with him on future opportunities to enhance and protect Tribal Nations.

Sincerely,

James Naranjo, Governor
Santa Clara Pueblo

Seminole Nation of Oklahoma

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
 LEWIS J. JOHNSON, PRINCIPAL CHIEF
 BRIAN THOMAS PALMER, ASSISTANT CHIEF



PHONE: 405-257-7200
 FAX: 405-257-7209

P.O. Box 1498, WEWOKA, OKLAHOMA 74884

January 10, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee, Chairman
 Energy and Natural Resource Committee
 363 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member
 Energy and Natural Resource Committee
 709 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the nominee of Secretary, U.S. Department of Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking member Heinrich

I write today in support of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. We are very excited about his nomination to serve the incoming Administration in this capacity.

The Secretary of Interior is the lead cabinet official charged with ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty responsibility with Tribal nations, he not only understands this relationship and duty, but will put actions to words.

Governor Burgum has built a strong relationship of trust and transparency with the five tribes of North Dakota. Governor Burgum will undoubtedly bring the same principles in his new role as Secretary. We can think of no one better for this job than Governor Burgum and look forward to his swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lewis J. Johnson".

Lewis J. Johnson
 Chief, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma



SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE

January 14, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman
 Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 363 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member
 Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 709 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for Doug Burgum to be Secretary of the Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

On behalf of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, I write today in support of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the Interior. Governor Burgum has years of experience with tribal governments in the State of North Dakota and I am happy to support his nomination to serve in this most important role.

The Secretary of the Interior is the lead cabinet official charged with ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty responsibilities with Tribal nations and his record in North Dakota shows that he not only understands this relationship and duty, but will put actions to words.

Governor Burgum has built a strong relationship of trust and transparency with the tribes of North Dakota, and will undoubtedly bring the same principles in his new role as Secretary.

We look forward to Governor Burgum's confirmation and a fruitful working relationship in the years ahead.

Sincerely,



Melvin J. Baker
Chairman
Southern Ute Indian Tribe

cc Hon. Michael Bennet
Hon. John Hickenlooper
Hon. Jeff Hurd



January 11, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Senate Comm. On Energy & Natural Resources
304 Senate Dirksen Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Senate Comm. On Energy & Natural Resources
304 Senate Dirksen Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: SRST Support for Governor Doug Burgum to serve as Secretary of the Dept. of Interior

Dear Senators Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

On behalf of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, I write to support Governor Doug Burgum's nomination to serve as Secretary of the Department of Interior. As Tribal Chairwoman, I personally know Governor Burgum's tireless efforts to work with our Tribal Nation, and the four other Tribal Nations of North Dakota. He consistently demonstrated his commitment to the nation-to-nation dialogue, hosting an annual summit to celebrate and share our accomplishments and opportunities. I appreciated his willingness to consult on the issues important to our communities such as health care, mental health, substance misuse, law enforcement, education, and economic development.

Governor Burgum understands the Native American dynamic which, if you're non-native can be difficult to maneuver, but he does it well. He understands the importance of honoring traditional values and culture, promoting family first, remembering who we are and where we came from, the struggles we endure and community wellness.

As a gentleman with an open mind and an open heart, and a man of strong spiritual character, I trust that Doug Burgum will serve Indian Country well, as a nominee for the position of Secretary with his vast knowledge and support of Tribal Sovereignty. It takes a special person, like Doug Burgum, to understand and implement the balance necessary to maintain healthy relationships with Tribes across our great Nation.

Thank you. *Wopila Tanka.*

Sincerely,

Janet Alkire, Chairwoman
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe



TRIBAL ALLIANCE OF SOVEREIGN INDIAN NATIONS

An intergovernmental association of tribal governments throughout Southern California

January 14, 2025

TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS:

AGUA CALIENTE BAND OF CAHUILA INDIANS

AUGUSTINE BAND OF CAHUILA INDIANS

CABAZON BAND OF CAHUILA INDIANS

CAHUILA BAND OF INDIANS

CHEMEHUWAI INDIAN TRIBE

MORONGO BAND OF MISSION INDIANS

PECHANGA BAND OF INDIANS

SAN MANSUE BAND OF MISSION INDIANS

SANTA ROSA BAND OF CAHUILA INDIANS

SANTA YNEZ BAND OF CHUMASH INDIANS

SOROBIA BAND OF LUISEÑO INDIANS

TORRES MARTINEZ DESERT CAHUILA INDIANS

TWENTY-NINE PALMS BAND OF MISSION INDIANS

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the nominee of Secretary; U.S. Department of Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking member Heinrich:

On behalf of the Tribal Alliance of Sovereign Indian Nations, an intergovernmental association of federally recognized tribes throughout Southern California, we write today in support of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. I am thrilled at his nomination to serve the incoming Administration in this capacity.

The Secretary of Interior is the lead cabinet official charged with ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty responsibility with Tribal nations, he not only understands this relationship and duty, but will put actions to words.

Governor Burgum has built a strong relationship of trust and transparency with the five tribes of North Dakota. Governor Burgum will undoubtedly bring the same principles in his new role as Secretary. We can think of no one better for this job than Governor Burgum and look forward to his swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

Sincerely,

Lynn "Nay" Valbuena
LYNN VALBUENA
Chairwoman

Catalina Chacon
CATALINA CHACON
Vice Chairwoman

Steven Estrada
STEVEN ESTRADA
Secretary

Rosemary Morillo
ROSEMARY MORILLO
Treasurer

CHAIRMAN
 MARSHALL PIERITE
VICE CHAIRMAN
 MARSHALL RAY SAMPSON, SR.
SECRETARY-TREASURER
 BEVERLY CHAPMAN-RACHAL
COUNCIL MEMBERS
 BOBBY PIERITE, SR.
 JAMES CRAIG III
 PAULETTE VOISELLE
 DR. JULIE ZAHN



January 9, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman
 Energy and Natural Resource Committee
 363 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member
 Energy and Natural Resource Committee
 709 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the nominee of Secretary; U.S. Department of Interior

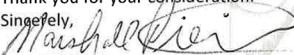
Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

I am writing today to express my enthusiastic support for Governor Doug Burgum's nomination as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. His appointment to this crucial role is truly exciting.

The Secretary of Interior holds the vital responsibility of ensuring that the United States honors and upholds its trust and treaty obligations with Tribal nations. Governor Burgum not only understands the significance of this duty, but is also committed to translating words into meaningful actions.

Throughout his tenure, Governor Burgum has established a strong relationship built on trust and transparency with the five tribes of North Dakota. I am confident that he will bring the same principles to his new role as Secretary. There is no one more suited for this position, and I eagerly anticipate his swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

 Marshall Pierite
 Chairman/CEO



January 13, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman
 U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 United States Senate
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources,

I am writing to express support for the confirmation of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Governor Burgum's wealth of experience in leadership, his deep commitment to public service, and his track record in managing complex governmental and environmental challenges make him uniquely qualified to serve in this critical role.

As Governor of North Dakota, Doug Burgum prioritized strengthening government-to-government relationships between the state and tribal nations. His efforts included advocating for tax-sharing agreements, enhancing tribal representation, and fostering cooperation in law enforcement. These initiatives reflect his commitment to supporting the priorities of Indian Country. His work on critical issues such as public safety, education, and economic development underscores his deep understanding of tribal matters and dedication to empowering tribal communities.

Furthermore, Governor Burgum's business background will be invaluable in managing the Department of the Interior's diverse responsibilities. His ability to oversee complex organizations, streamline operations, and prioritize long-term sustainability aligns perfectly with the Department's mission.

I respectfully request the support of the Committee for his confirmation. Thank you for your attention as we move forward together. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Crystalyne Curley, Speaker
 25th Navajo Nation Council



U.S. Chamber of Commerce

1615 H Street, NW
Washington, DC 20062-2000
uschamber.com

January 27, 2025

To the Members of the United States Senate:

As the U.S. Senate considers the nomination of Governor Doug Burgum to be Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce offers the following observations. Governor Burgum's long record of success in both the public and private sectors demonstrates his qualifications to serve as Secretary. As governor of North Dakota, he was praised for his pragmatic style and collaborative work with diverse groups of stakeholders, including on important federal lands and natural resource issues under the purview of the Department of Interior. We urge quick consideration by the Senate of Governor Burgum's nomination and look forward to working with him upon his confirmation.

During his confirmation hearing, Mr. Burgum displayed a clear understanding of the critical balance between environmental stewardship and economic growth, earning strong bipartisan support from members of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. His commitment to revisiting current land use policies reflects a common-sense approach to developing America's energy and natural resources while ensuring responsible management of nearly one-fifth of the nation's lands.

We look forward to working with Governor Burgum to secure his balanced vision of advancing environmental stewardship and economic growth. Thank you for considering his nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Neil L. Bradley".

Neil L. Bradley
Executive Vice President, Chief Policy Officer,
and Head of Strategic Advocacy
U.S. Chamber of Commerce



P. O. Box 908
Alpine, CA 91903
1 Viejas Grade Road
Alpine, CA 91901

John A. Christman, Chairman
Victor E. Woods, Vice Chairman
Rene Curo, Tribal Secretary
Samuel Q. Brown, Tribal Treasurer
Adrian M. Brown, Councilman
Gabriel T. TeSam, Jr., Councilman
Kevin M. Carrizosa, Councilman

Phone: 619.445.3810
Fax: 619.445.5337
viejas.com

January 10, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: SUPPORT FOR NOMINEE GOVERNOR BURGUM FOR SECRETARY OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

I am writing on behalf of the Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians in support of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Viejas is very excited about his nomination to serve the incoming Administration as the lead cabinet official responsible for ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty responsibility with Tribal nations. Governor Burgum not only understands this relationship and duty but will take action to honor those responsibilities.

Viejas is informed that Governor Burgum has built a strong relationship of trust and transparency with the five tribes of North Dakota. Governor Burgum will undoubtedly bring the same principles in his new role as Secretary. Viejas can think of no one better for the job than Governor Burgum and looks forward to his swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Christman".

John A. Christman, Chairman
Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians



Kasey Velasquez
*Executive Office of the Chairman
 White Mountain Apache Tribe*

January 10, 2025

Mike Lee, Chairman
 Energy and Natural Resources Committee
 363 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

Martin Heinrich, Ranking Member
 Energy and Natural Resources Committee
 709 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

RE: SUPPORT FOR THE NOMINEE OF SECRETARY; U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

I write today in support of Governor Doug Burgum to serve as the next Secretary of the U.S. Department of Interior. I am thrilled at his nomination to serve the incoming Administration in this capacity.

The Secretary of Interior is the lead cabinet official charged with ensuring that the United States upholds its trust and treaty responsibility with Tribal nations, he not only understands this relationship and duty, but will put actions to words,

Governor Burgum has built a strong relationship of trust and transparency with the five tribes of North Dakota. Governor Burgum will undoubtedly bring the same principles in his new role as Secretary. We can think of no one better for this job than Governor Burgum and look forward to his swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

Sincerely,

Kasey Velasquez, Chairman
 WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE

YAVAPAI-APACHE NATION



Executive Office

Chairwoman Tanya Lewis

Vice Chairman Ricardo Pacheco

2400 West Datsi Street, Camp Verde, AZ 86322

Phone (928)567-1021

Fax (928)567-3994

January 10, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
 Chairman
 Energy and Natural Resource Committee
 363 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
 Ranking Member
 Energy and Natural Resource Committee
 709 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the nominee of Secretary; U.S. Department of Interior

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

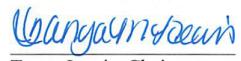
On behalf of the Yavapai-Apache Nation of Arizona (Nation), I write today in support of Governor Doug Burgum's nomination to serve as the next Secretary of the Department of the Interior. Governor Burgum is an excellent choice to lead the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, which, as you know, is responsible for implementing a complex array of federal laws and policies related to Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

Governor Burgum's actions tell us all we need to know about his qualifications to serve as our next Secretary of the Interior. After taking office in 2016, Governor Burgum worked swiftly to improve the state's relationship with North Dakota's five Tribes through a concerted effort to meet with Tribes and understand their concerns and points of view. He has also acted as a convening force between state and local governments and North Dakota's Tribes on a wide variety of important issues, including law enforcement, economic development, natural resources, taxes, and other matters.

The Nation believes Governor Burgum's experience and commitment to Tribal collaboration will translate successfully to his new role as the Secretary of the Interior. In the coming years, the United States and Indian Country will need to work closely together to address critical issues for our citizens, such as the need to provide certainty for Indian water rights, increase economic opportunity on Tribal lands, preserve cultural resources, and ensure that the United States' longstanding treaty and trust obligations are fulfilled. Governor Burgum can be trusted to meet these challenges head on and to find solutions that will work for Indian Country and for our neighboring communities and other stakeholders.

Accordingly, the Nation is honored to urge Governor Burgum's swift confirmation in Congress.

Sincerely,


Tanya Lewis, Chairwoman

