

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 16, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Zinke:

We appreciate your stated opposition to the sale or transfer of federal lands out of federal ownership and we urge you to follow through on your commitment to retain America's public lands. As Montana's at-large member in the U.S. House of Representatives and during your nomination hearing you vowed to support public lands and protect every Americans' right to access those lands. We absolutely agree with you that public lands should remain in public hands.

As you are aware, there has been a growing movement among certain states to have federal lands conveyed to state ownership and control or to have states assume the management activities on federal lands. Supporters of federal land transfers to states are issuing resolutions and introducing legislation in state Houses asserting state and local authority over public lands. These efforts run afoul of the Constitution and Congress' plenary authority to regulate and manage federal lands under the Supremacy Clause.

In response to these efforts, a coalition of hunters, anglers, hikers, bikers, paddlers, wildlife watchers, and outdoor businesses recently submitted a petition to initiate rulemaking under the Administrative Procedure Act (APA) requesting the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) to issue regulations and guidance prohibiting the sale or transfer of public lands unless authorized by Congress or under limited circumstances and clear authorities given under law.

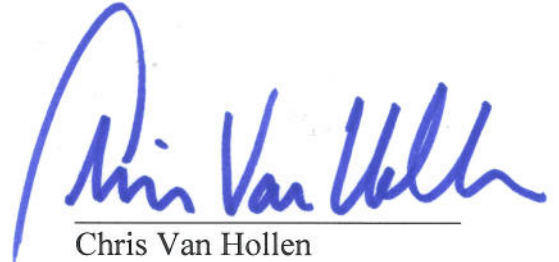
So there is no ambiguity about your position or the limited power the Department of the Interior retains regarding land transfers, we urge you to respond to this petition and draft the proper regulations clarifying DOI's authorities and process to sell or transfer public lands. We, like you, are committed to retaining ownership of federal lands for the use and enjoyment of all Americans, which will grow our economy and build resilient communities and landscapes into future generations.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter and we look forward to working with you to codify this important policy.

Sincerely,



Tom Udall  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



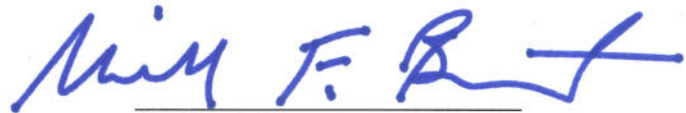
Jeff Merkley  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



Michael Bennet  
United States Senator



Tina Smith  
United States Senator