

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 20, 2006

BLM Director Kathleen Clarke
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Clarke,

It has come to our attention that the BLM has proposed significant changes in the management of its National Landscape Conservation System. We are writing to request that your office brief us on these changes before changes are implemented.

As co-chairs of the National Landscape Conservation System Caucus, it is our mission to ensure the agency can and does protect this special 26 million acre network of western lands and waters. These National Monuments, wilderness areas, scenic rivers and trails provide a uniquely American experience, valued by millions of our constituents.

Of particular concern are the implications of the new "Managing for Excellence" initiative on the Conservation System's budget, staffing, and program objectives. We call upon your agency to provide data and commitments regarding:

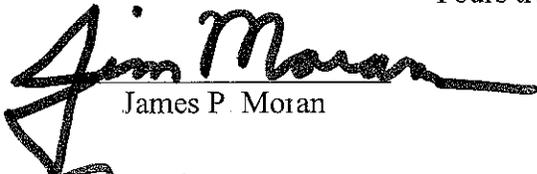
- The impact of the proposed changes on the Conservation System's FY08 budget and staffing. The System already operates with bare-bones funding and numerous unfilled positions, with no capacity to sustain further cuts.
- Historical and projected budgets and staffing levels for programs now expected to be managed under the umbrella of the National Landscape Conservation System office, such as cooperative conservation, partnerships, and volunteerism.
- A new formal budget structure that would provide ongoing transparency regarding the Conservation System's budget.
- Performance goals for the Conservation System program and other new programs to be managed in this Washington Office.

- Details about how the BLM will measure the impacts of the reorganization on the ability of Conservation System staff to achieve their mission of keeping these lands “healthy, wild, and open.”

We would like to meet with you and your staff to discuss the above issues, and we urge the BLM to withhold implementing the *Managing for Excellence* initiative as it relates to the Conservation System pending congressional review and public comment.

We look forward to working with you regarding these concerns.

Yours truly,



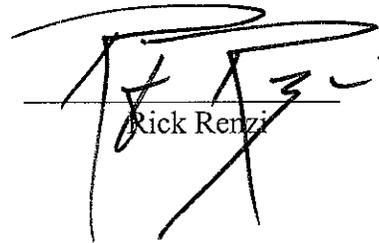
James P. Moran



Mary Bono



Raul M. Grijalva



Rick Renzi

National Landscape Conservation System Co-Chairs: