

October 25, 2022

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

The below signed hunting, fishing and wildlife conservation organizations are writing to ensure that the Nation's largest public land manager, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), receives critically needed funding from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to address both administrative and program capacity challenges. We support the efforts of the Department of the Interior (DOI) as they seek to direct funding to implement administration priorities to maintain, conserve, and enhance our public lands to benefit people today, and future generations.

The BLM is the country's largest land manager, managing 245 million surface acres and 700 million subsurface acres, or one out of every ten acres across the country. The BLM also manages more than 250,000 miles of streams and rivers, roughly 10% of the nation's riverscapes, which provide drinking water to an estimated 1 out of 10 people in the western United States. These lands and waters provide a wealth of resources, including oil, gas, minerals, and renewable energy production. But just as importantly, they provide large, intact habitats that support a multitude of terrestrial and aquatic species, including wildlife migration corridors; riparian and floodplain systems; extensive outdoor recreation opportunities, including hunting and fishing; and climate resilience and adaptation services. BLM-managed lands are critical to achieving the goals of the Administration's America the Beautiful Initiative.

Managing these lands and waters to meet the full extent of the multiple use mandate, and the priorities of the Biden Administration, requires extensive resources. Yet BLM is not funded at levels commensurate to the scale of challenges the agency is tasked to address, and not nearly at a level commensurate with other federal land managers, per acre managed. And while BLM's funding needs are critical, the agency did not receive specific allocations of funds under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) or IRA, unlike other federal land management agencies. We believe this is an unfortunate oversight, but one that DOI is able to alleviate with discretion provided in the IRA.

The IRA created many funding streams, of which we believe three are most relevant to support BLM's conservation efforts:

- Section 50303 - \$150 million for DOI for development of more efficient, accurate, and timely environmental reviews
- Section 50221 - \$250 million available through Fiscal Year 2031 for conservation, protection and resiliency of lands and resources administered by the National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management
- Section 50222 - \$250 million available through Fiscal Year 2031 for conservation, ecosystem and habitat restoration projects on lands administered by the National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management

While we support the mission and employees of the National Park Service (NPS), and all DOI agencies and bureaus, we strongly recommend that the bulk of these funds be directed towards the needs of the BLM, given the critical need and conservation opportunity. The NPS has been the recipient of significant levels of federal funding not available to the BLM (e.g., IRA section 50223 - \$500 million available through Fiscal Year 2030 to hire employees in units of the National Park Service, and IRA section 50224 - \$200 million through Fiscal Year 2026 for priority deferred maintenance projects). With regard to the shared \$500 million between BLM and NPS in Sections 50221 and 50222, BLM's landscape-scale restoration needs are far greater across BLM's 250 million acres in terms of both scale and level of degradation than NPS' 85 million acres.

Specific to IRA section 50303 funding, BLM conducts more analyses under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) than any other DOI agency, and many of these analyses lead to or have the potential to establish major conservation outcomes at landscape scales. For example, the BLM's current review of 26 million acres of "D-1" lands in Alaska, and evaluation of 11 million acres of big game habitat in Colorado are at a vast scale. Several BLM state offices are also in the process of developing and implementing programmatic environmental assessments to increase the pace and scale of low-tech, process-based restoration efforts designed to improve the health of riverscapes to enhance resilience to drought, flooding, and wildfire. No other DOI agency works at this scale and scope. **We strongly recommend that BLM be allocated the majority of these funds to allow the agency to address the nearly overwhelming magnitude of NEPA analyses it has underway.**

We recognize that DOI has many funding priorities, and that discerning specific allocations to address a myriad of needs amongst agencies is challenging. In this instance, we believe that the needs of the BLM are paramount and strongly encourage DOI to direct critically needed funds from IRA allocations towards ensuring our nation's largest land manager can support the Administration's conservation goals.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our public lands.

Sincerely,

Archery Trade Association

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Mule Deer Foundation

National Deer Association

National Wild Turkey Federation

National Wildlife Federation

North American Grouse Partnership

Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership

Trout Unlimited

Wild Sheep Foundation

Wildlife Forever

Wildlife Management Institute

Cc: Tommy Beaudreau
Deputy Secretary
Department of the Interior

Sarah Greenberger
Associate Deputy Secretary
Department of the Interior

Laura Daniel-Davis
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management
Department of the Interior

Tracy Stone-Manning
Director
Bureau of Land Management

Nada Culver
Deputy Director of Policy and Programs
Bureau of Land Management