



United States Department of the Interior
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Washington, D.C. 20240
<http://www.blm.gov>



SEP 11 2015

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop:

Thank you for your letter dated May 18, 2015, inquiring about a potential merger of the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Arizona and New Mexico state offices. The BLM appreciates having had the opportunity to provide a briefing for your staff in regard to this matter.

The BLM will maintain both its Arizona and New Mexico state offices and both state director positions. There will be no merger, and we plan to move ahead with filling the New Mexico State Director position.

Declining budgets and sequestration have eroded the BLM's ability to deliver the services and programs that the public expects of us. Because of ever increasing pressure on BLM's budget, the agency's staffing level has dropped by 1,300 positions or 12 percent over the last five years. Not only has the BLM's budget declined in real dollar terms, but fixed costs have also increased substantially, further reducing the BLM's purchasing power. This serious decline in agency resources and personnel comes at the same time that public interest in our nation's public lands is increasing. As a result, the BLM must always be looking for ways to use our budget and personnel more efficiently.

Should you require additional information on this matter, please feel free to contact me or your staff may contact Patrick Wilkinson, BLM Legislative Affairs Division Chief, at 202-912-7429. A similar response has been sent to the cosigners of your letter.

Sincerely,

Steven A. Ellis
Deputy Director, Operations



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SEP 11 2015

The Honorable Tom McClintock
Chairman, Subcommittee on Federal Lands
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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