

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

February 14, 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 write to urge you to stop implementing the reorganization of the Department of the Interior until you provide a detailed and well-justified plan to Congress. You have been discussing the reorganization since your second day on the job.¹ When asked for a copy of the plans, you have assured interested parties like us that details would be made available along with the release of the proposed budget for FY19 as required by OMB.² Those assurances were not honored.

The reorganization is already being implemented. It has been used to justify significant agency actions like reassigning several members of the Senior Executive Service^{3,4,5,6} the rescission of an existing 100-year plan for the National Park Service,⁷ the ongoing hiring freeze,⁸ and the expansion of authority for Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas, Doug Domenech.⁹

¹ Hiar, Corbin and Patterson, Brittany, "Zinke Promises Reorganization, Fight against Budget Cuts." *Zinke Promises Reorganization, Fight against Budget Cuts*" 3 Mar. 2017, www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060050924.

² Mulvaney, Mick. "Comprehensive Plan for Reforming the Federal Government and Reducing the Federal Civilian Workforce." Received by Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies, Office of Management and Budget, 12 Apr. 2017,

³ Mintz, Sam and Lunney, Kellie, "Expect reorganization details in 60 days – Zinke." *E&E News Publishing*. June 20, 2017. <https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/stories/1060056320>

⁴ Yachnin, Jennifer and Hiar, Corbin, "Zinke shaking up senior staff- report." *E&E News Publishing*. June 16, 2017. <https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060056174>

⁵ Streater, Scott, "3 BLM state directors removed in reorganization – sources." *E&E News Publishing*. June 27, 2017. <https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060056655>

⁶ Streater, Scott, "Staff reorganization on hold pending IG probe – sources." *E&E News Publishing*. September 29, 2017. <https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/stories/1060062173>

⁷ Email. Legislative and Congressional Affairs, National Park Service, to Hill Staff. Aug 21, 2017

⁸ Notes from Zinke's Visit to DFC. July 21, 2017. https://www.eenews.net/assets/2017/08/15/document_gw_01.pdf

⁹ "Secretary Zinke Announces Expanded Role for Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas to Include Ocean Activities and International Affairs." *Doi.gov*, Department of Interior, 5 Feb. 2018, www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-zinke-announces-expanded-role-assistant-secretary-insular-areas-include.


Even though the FY19 budget has been released without any substantive new information about the reorganization, DOI refuses to commit to an estimated date by which the plan will be shared with Congress or the American people. You have acknowledged that it cannot proceed without Congressional approval.¹⁰ Implementing what you have called the “greatest reorganization in the history of”¹¹ DOI in a piecemeal fashion using existing, unrelated authorities to avoid full scrutiny by Congress will make the task of Congressional approval more difficult, if not impossible. The difficulty will only increase if similar concerns about substance and process continue to be raised by stakeholders like the Western Governors’ Association.¹²

The impacts of an ill-considered reorganization of DOI would be absorbed by a wide range of stakeholders, and would be permanent in some cases. Without a detailed plan and justification for an unprecedented reorganization of DOI and its bureaus, the implementation of the reorganization must stop.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources


A. Donald McEachin
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight and
Investigations

¹⁰ Town Hall meeting, February 1, 2018, available at <https://livestream.com/accounts/3723018/events/8029048>

¹¹ Mintz, Sam and Lunney, Kellie, “Expect reorganization details in 60 days – Zinke.” *E&E News Publishing*. June 20, 2017. <https://www.eenews.net/eenewspm/stories/1060056320>

¹² Letter. Daugaard, D and Ige, D to Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke. February 1, 2018.
http://westgov.org/images/editor/DOI_Reorg_FINAL.pdf