

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

November 2, 2023

Julia Bernal, Executive Director  
Pueblo Action Alliance  
211 10th St SW  
Albuquerque, NM 87102

Dear Ms. Bernal:

The House Committee on Natural Resources (Committee) is conducting oversight on the relationship between the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Pueblo Action Alliance (PAA). The Committee is specifically concerned with Secretary Deb Haaland's potential lack of impartiality and the misuse of her position to benefit PAA.

Additionally, the Committee is conducting ongoing oversight of the potential manipulation of U.S. tax-exempt organizations, including by foreign entities and individuals, to influence America's environmental, natural resource, and energy policies. Publicly available information on PAA's fundraising, lobbying, advocacy, and political activities suggest that PAA may be influenced by foreign interests.

As you are aware, PAA regularly engages in lobbying, political activities, and extensive advocacy efforts regarding environmental and energy issues, particularly as it relates to oil and gas production on federal lands.<sup>1</sup> DOI is responsible for managing oil and gas production on federal lands.<sup>2</sup> Secretary Haaland has purportedly met with PAA leaders during her time as Secretary of the Interior to discuss PAA's opposition to oil and gas production on federal lands.<sup>3</sup> Secretary Haaland has also met with PAA leaders on other occasions<sup>4</sup> and broadcasts her association with PAA while serving as Secretary of the Interior, including by adorning personal items with PAA insignia.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, PAA frequently touts their close relationship with Secretary Haaland.<sup>6</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> See generally PUEBLO ACTION ALLIANCE, <https://www.puebloactionalliance.org/> (last visited Oct 5, 2023).

<sup>2</sup> Department of the Interior, LATHAM & WATKINS, <https://www.lw.com/en/weve-got-washington-covered/department-of-interior> (last visited Nov. 2, 2023).

<sup>3</sup> Hot and Dry Podcast: Water Back & Pueblo Action Alliance (Sep. 13, 2021), <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/water-back-the-pueblo-action-alliance/id1449804910?i=1000535198752>.

<sup>4</sup> Pueblo Action Alliance (@puebloactionalliance), INSTAGRAM (July 30, 2021), [https://www.instagram.com/p/CR-SBG-LjGY/?img\\_index=2](https://www.instagram.com/p/CR-SBG-LjGY/?img_index=2).

<sup>5</sup> Pueblo Action Alliance (@puebloactionalliance), INSTAGRAM (Mar. 18, 2021), <https://www.instagram.com/p/CMkPS-MFGZc/>.

<sup>6</sup> Pueblo Action Alliance (@puebloactionalliance), INSTAGRAM (Jan. 7, 2021), <https://www.instagram.com/p/CJwfQ9Wlkvg/>.

Committee is interested in learning more about the unique relationship between Secretary Haaland and PAA.

In addition to its advocacy efforts in America, PAA partners with organizations focused on activity outside of the United States. Notably, PAA’s work includes collaborations with (a) the All-African People’s Revolutionary Party,<sup>7</sup> a group fighting for the “unification of Africa under an All-African Socialist Government,” and (b) the Venceremos Brigade, a group that advocates for policies in “solidarity with the Cuban Revolution”<sup>8</sup> to fight what it describes as American attempts to “overthrow” the Cuban revolution that resulted in communist Cuba.<sup>9</sup>

According to the FBI, the intelligence agency of the Cuban government helped established the Venceremos Brigade to recruit “individuals who are politically oriented and who someday may obtain a position, elective or appointive, somewhere in the U.S. Government, which would provide the Cuban Government with access to political, economic and military intelligence.”<sup>10</sup> The Venceremos Brigade’s efforts to cultivate politically-minded Americans continues and, in July 2019, the Venceremos Brigade and the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) hosted members of PAA for a trip to Cuba.<sup>11</sup> ICAP is currently led by Fernando González Llort, a Cuban spy who served nearly 16 years in American prison for espionage and is an ongoing evangelist for the Communist Party of Cuba.<sup>12</sup> Since the July 2019 trip to Cuba, the All-African People’s Revolutionary Party, the Venceremos Brigade, and PAA have continued to work together on shared projects and goals, including the creation of a New Mexico-based chapter of the Venceremos Brigade.<sup>13</sup>

PAA’s partnership with the All-African People’s Revolutionary Party and the Venceremos Brigade is seemingly based on shared ideology and goals. PAA and its leaders advocate for the dismantling of America’s economic and political system and believe America is irredeemable because there is no “opportunity to reform a system that isn’t founded on good morals or values.”<sup>14</sup>

Despite PAA’s work in America and abroad, there is a dearth of public information regarding PAA’s funding sources and compliance with federal and state nonprofit regulations. The

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<sup>7</sup> *Local Solidarity*, PUEBLO ACTION ALLIANCE, <https://www.puebloactionalliance.org/local> (last visited Oct. 4, 2023).

<sup>8</sup> *New Mexico Regional Committee*, PUEBLO ACTION ALLIANCE, <https://www.puebloactionalliance.org/new-page> (last visited Oct. 4, 2023).

<sup>9</sup> *About the Venceremos Brigade*, VENCEREMOS BRIGADE, <https://vb4cuba.com/about-the-venceremos-brigade/> (last visited Oct. 4, 2023).

<sup>10</sup> Nicholas M. Horrock, *F.B.I. Asserts Cuba Aided Weathermen*, N.Y. TIMES (Oct. 9, 1977), <https://www.nytimes.com/1977/10/09/archives/fbi-asserts-cuba-aided-weathermen-secret-data-on-war-protest-years.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Sheldon Tenorio, *Solidarity with Cuba*, PUEBLO ACTION ALLIANCE (Feb. 26, 2021), <https://www.puebloactionalliance.org/blog/solidarity-with-cuba>.

<sup>12</sup> Araceli Guede, Fernando González, *Cuban prisoner in the US: “The years in prison made my revolutionary ideas stronger”*, 20MINUTOS (June 20, 2019), <https://www.20minutos.es/noticia/3676716/0/fernando-gonzalez-presos-cubano-eeuu-anos-prision-hicieron-mas-fuertes-mis-ideas-revolucionarias/>.

<sup>13</sup> Press Release, *For Immediate Release*, PUEBLO ACTION ALLIANCE (Dec. 6, 2019), <https://puebloalliance.wordpress.com/2019/12/07/for-immediate-release/>.

<sup>14</sup> *Hot and Dry Podcast*, *supra* note 3.

Committee has found no record of PAA filing a Form 990 with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), a form used by U.S. government agencies to prevent organizations from abusing or manipulating their tax-exempt status.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, PAA is not listed as a grant recipient on tax forms filed by the Southwest Organizing Project,<sup>16</sup> purportedly PAA's fiscal sponsor.<sup>17</sup>

A review of PAA's filing history and nonprofit status with the New Mexico Secretary of State is also cause for concern. Despite operating at least since 2018,<sup>18</sup> PAA did not incorporate in New Mexico until October 15, 2021.<sup>19</sup> On March 17, 2022, the State of New Mexico revoked PAA's nonprofit status.<sup>20</sup> PAA's nonprofit status was revoked until June 5, 2023.<sup>21</sup> Despite losing its nonprofit status, PAA continued to operate and conduct programming in New Mexico and across America between March 2022 and June 2023.<sup>22</sup>

The Committee is concerned with the unique intimacy between PAA and Secretary Haaland, PAA's partnership with international socialist organizations intent on influencing American policy, and the opaqueness surrounding PAA's funding sources and compliance with U.S. nonprofit regulations. To assist the Committee in ensuring the impartiality and ethical compliance of Secretary Haaland, preventing the manipulation of nonprofit entities, and combatting foreign influence over America's energy policies, please provide the following

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<sup>15</sup> *Form 990*, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, <https://guides.loc.gov/nonprofit-sector/form-990> (last visited Oct. 5, 2023).

<sup>16</sup> SOUTHWEST ORGANIZING PROJECT, *Form 990* (Fiscal Year 2020), [https://apps.irs.gov/pub/epostcard/cor/850368743\\_202006\\_990\\_2021022217738555.pdf](https://apps.irs.gov/pub/epostcard/cor/850368743_202006_990_2021022217738555.pdf); SOUTHWEST ORGANIZING PROJECT, *Form 990* (Fiscal Year 2019), [https://apps.irs.gov/pub/epostcard/cor/850368743\\_201906\\_990\\_2020021417150463.pdf](https://apps.irs.gov/pub/epostcard/cor/850368743_201906_990_2020021417150463.pdf); SOUTHWEST ORGANIZING PROJECT, *Form 990* (Fiscal Year 2018), [https://apps.irs.gov/pub/epostcard/cor/850368743\\_201806\\_990\\_2018120315969366.pdf](https://apps.irs.gov/pub/epostcard/cor/850368743_201806_990_2018120315969366.pdf); SOUTHWEST ORGANIZING PROJECT, *Form 990* (Fiscal Year 2017), [https://apps.irs.gov/pub/epostcard/cor/850368743\\_201706\\_990\\_2018030215198957.pdf](https://apps.irs.gov/pub/epostcard/cor/850368743_201706_990_2018030215198957.pdf); SOUTHWEST ORGANIZING PROJECT, *Form 990* (Fiscal Year 2016), [https://apps.irs.gov/pub/epostcard/cor/850368743\\_201606\\_990\\_2017090114699540.pdf](https://apps.irs.gov/pub/epostcard/cor/850368743_201606_990_2017090114699540.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> *Support Us*, PUEBLO ACTION ALLIANCE, <https://www.puebloactionalliance.org/donate> (last visited Oct. 5, 2023).

<sup>18</sup> *Secretary of the Department of the Interior: Official Statement from Pueblo Action Alliance on Representative Deb Haaland's Nomination*, PUEBLO ACTION ALLIANCE (Mar. 15, 2021), <https://www.puebloactionalliance.org/blog/secretary-of-the-department-of-the-interior-official-statement-from-pueblo-action-alliance-on-the-vote-to-confirm-deb-haaland-nomination>.

<sup>19</sup> Corporations and Business Services, *Pueblo Action Alliance*, NEW MEXICO SECRETARY OF STATE <https://portal.sos.state.nm.us/BFS/online/corporationbusinesssearch/CorporationBusinessInformation> (last visited Oct. 5, 2023).

<sup>20</sup> *Id.*

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> *See Our Story: The Indigenous Led Fight to Protect Greater Chaco Debuts in Albuquerque to Sold-Out Crowd!*, FRACK OFF GREATER CHACO (July 20, 2022), <https://www.frackoffchaco.org/blog/ourstorydebut> [describing how PAA hosted and sold tickets to a movie that featured Secretary Haaland regarding the withdrawal of oil, gas, and minerals in New Mexico]; Press Release, *Greater Chaco advocates travel from New Mexico to call on congress for environmental justice for Greater Chaco*, WILDEARTH GUARDIANS (Dec. 15, 2022), <https://wildearthguardians.org/press-releases/greater-chaco-advocates-travel-dc/>; Pueblo Action Alliance (@puebloactionalliance), INSTAGRAM (Apr. 6, 2023), [https://www.instagram.com/p/CrhKfVtP6wQ/?img\\_index=1](https://www.instagram.com/p/CrhKfVtP6wQ/?img_index=1); Pueblo Action Alliance (@puebloactionalliance), INSTAGRAM (Aug. 5, 2022), [https://www.instagram.com/p/Cg4j0\\_4OP4p/](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cg4j0_4OP4p/); Pueblo Action Alliance (@puebloactionalliance), INSTAGRAM (July 2, 2022), <https://www.instagram.com/p/CfhWK9Fvwpz/>.

records, documents, communications, and information to the Committee, in electronic format, no later than November 21, 2023:

1. All documents and communications—from March 16, 2021 to the present—between all officers, board members, and staff of PAA and Secretary Haaland.
2. All documents and communications—from March 16, 2021 to the present—between all officers, board members, and staff of PAA and all members, staff, and agents of DOI.
3. All documents and communications—from January 1, 2017 to the present— between all officers, board members, and staff of PAA and all officers, board members, and staff of the Venceremos Brigade.
4. All documents and communications—from January 1, 2017 to the present— between all officers, board members, and staff of PAA and all officers, board members, and staff of ICAP.
5. All documents and communications—from January 1, 2017 to the present— between all officers, board members, and staff of PAA and all members and/or agents for the Communist Party of Cuba.
6. Provide a list of PAA participants for the July 2019 trip to Cuba.
7. All documents and communications, from January 1, 2017, to the present, regarding any remuneration, transaction, or contribution that involve PAA, or any related tax-exempt organization, and any foreign entity, foreign national, or any entity or individual associated with any foreign entity, foreign official, foreign national, or foreign business interest, including their agents, representatives, or intermediaries. This includes but is not limited to Russian, Chinese, and Cuban entities, nationals, or their agents, representatives, or intermediaries. This also includes, but is not limited to, documents relating to direct and indirect contributions.
8. Copies of any policies or procedures PAA has implemented to ensure that funds from foreign sources or individuals are not used for political activities within the United States, unless disclosed as required by law.
9. Copies of any policies or procedures PAA has implemented to ensure that fundraising activities within the United States that are, in whole or in part, on behalf of or in the interests of a foreign government, entity, or individual are disclosed as required by law.
10. Copies of any filings PAA has made with the IRS, including, but not limited to, Form 990s.
  - a. If PAA has not filed any documents with the IRS, including but not limited to, Form 990s, provide an explanation sufficient to demonstrate why IRS filing requirements do not apply to PAA.

11. Documents sufficient to show PAA’s donors and fundraising sources from January 7, 2017 to the present.
12. Copies of any filings PAA has made with the New Mexico Secretary of State.
13. Provide an explanation to demonstrate why PAA’s nonprofit status was revoked by the New Mexico Secretary of State between March 17, 2022 and June 5, 2023.

An attachment to this letter provides additional instructions for responding to the requests from the Committee on Natural Resources. Please contact the Majority staff for the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee at (202) 225-2761 or [HNRR.Oversight@mail.house.gov](mailto:HNRR.Oversight@mail.house.gov) with any questions. Under House Rule X, the Committee on Natural Resources has “general oversight” of any matter relating to its jurisdiction, including the Department of the Interior and domestic energy production. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Bruce Westerman  
Chairman  
Committee on Natural Resources



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations



Mike Collins  
Member of Congress



Wesley Hunt  
Member of Congress



Anna Paulina Luna  
Member of Congress



Matt Rosendale  
Member of Congress

Enclosure