



May 18, 2017

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski:

The Public Lands Council (PLC) and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) would like to take this opportunity to express our support for the confirmation of David Bernhardt to be the Deputy Secretary of the Interior. PLC is the only national organization dedicated solely to representing the roughly 22,000 ranchers who hold federal grazing permits and operate on federal lands. NCBA is the beef industry's largest and oldest national marketing and trade association, representing American cattlemen and women who provide much of the nation's supply of food and own or manage a large portion of America's private property.

Mr. Bernhardt has a wealth of experience at the Department of the Interior, having previously served as the Department's Deputy Solicitor, deputy chief of staff and counselor to the Secretary, and as director of congressional and legislative affairs and counselor to the Secretary under former Interior Secretary Norton. He then went on to serve as the Solicitor under former Secretary Dirk Kempthorne. He is respected and widely regarded as a leader both inside and outside the Department. In his current capacity, Mr. Bernhardt leads the natural resource law practice at Brownstein Hyatt Farber and Schreck, LLP and has his finger on the pulse of everything that is happening in the natural resource world. Finally, as a native of Colorado Mr. Bernhardt understands western issues and the unique challenges that our members face while operating on public lands in the west.

Western ranchers own approximately 120 million acres of the most productive private land in the west and manage nearly 250 million acres of public land. Ranchers who hold grazing permits on public land do vital work that benefits public land including the improvement of water sources, improvement of wildlife habitat, and maintaining the open space that Americans enjoy. Having leadership at the Department of Interior who understands public lands, and who values true cooperation with stakeholders is in the best interest of all Americans.

PLC and NCBA appreciate the opportunity to provide our input on behalf of our members – the nation's food and fiber producers. We urge the Senate to confirm Mr. Bernhardt without delay.

Sincerely,

Dave Eliason
President
Public Lands Council

Craig Uden
President
National Cattlemen's Beef Association