

The Hon. Steve Daines  
United States Senate  
320 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510



Delivered via email.

Dear Senator Daines:

On behalf of the thousands of members of Montana Conservation Voters, we write to express our disappointment in your recent threat to block the nomination of Representative Deb Haaland to serve as the nation's next Secretary of the Interior.

Your words about Rep. Haaland's nomination, Senator Daines, ring hollow. They may be politically expedient for you, but they do not resonate with the best interests of the people of Montana.

First, we'd like to note your months of silence on one of the last people to be nominated for a Senate confirmed position at the Interior Department, William Perry Pendley. Despite countless unanswered complaints from your constituents during the embattled tenure of illegal Acting BLM Director William Perry Pendley, you remained silent. Mr. Pendley's radical, anti-Western policies included advocating for the selloff of our public lands but you refused to demand a confirmation vote for Mr. Pendley, allowing him to serve in what a federal judge called an "unlawful," unconstitutional leadership position. Montanans wish you had expressed concern over Acting Director Pendley's radicalism like you are now with the nation's first indigenous woman ever to be nominated to a cabinet position.

Second, you indicated that Rep. Haaland supports "several radical issues," including her opposition to the Keystone XL Pipeline and President Biden's temporary moratorium on new oil and gas leases on federal lands. The future of Keystone XL Pipeline, as you may or may not know, is not a decision that rests with the next Interior Secretary, and the decision to halt the controversial project has already been made.

As for the federal moratorium on new oil and gas leases, we direct you to [recent government data](#) highlighting how little an impact President Biden's moratorium actually has on jobs in Montana. More than 1.5 million acres of federal land in Montana are currently leased to developers, but more than 1 million of them are not developed. In 2019, the government leased more than 86,000 acres of leases. Last year, the government leased only 17,000 acres. The federal leasing process is broken, and this "radical" review is the first step to improve the system for Montanans and our treasured landscapes

Again, we find your reasoning lacks substance and facts. Rep. Haaland is the experienced conservation champion we need at the helm of Interior. She will protect Montana's outdoors by defending our natural resources, expanding our access to public lands, promoting sound resource and wildlife management, and serving as the federal government's top liaison to tribal governments.

We urge you to reconsider your position and put partisan politics aside to do what's right for the future of Montana and America. As always, we welcome your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'W. Tawney', is positioned above the typed name.

Whitney Tawney  
Executive Director  
Montana Conservation Voters