



April 8, 2020

Delivered via email.

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

Congressman Greg Gianforte
United States House of Representatives
1222 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Daines and Congressman Gianforte:

On behalf of our members and all Montanans who value our public lands, we write to express our deep disappointment in the quiet April 3 extension of William Perry Pendley's appointment as acting director of the Bureau of Land Management. Mr. Pendley has not been confirmed by the U.S. Senate and, with his long record of opposing America's public lands, this second extension of his tenure at BLM is an insult to Montanans who value them.

Despite Mr. Pendley's unconfirmed status, the BLM has quietly [rushed through 35 actions](#) since President Trump signed the first coronavirus emergency response bill on March 6. These actions include selling leases, closing and opening comment periods and expanding mining and drilling on public lands.

Because you have yet to acknowledge the hundreds of Montanans who have already expressed concern about Mr. Pendley's appointment via [our letter to you dated February 6](#), we are specifically requesting your direct response to the constituents you serve and have ignored. Your continued silence on the issue of Montana's public lands is deeply concerning, and it indicates that your rhetoric in support of public lands may be more for political expediency in an election year.

As you well know, Mr. Pendley oversees 245 million acres of public land, yet he told *National Review* that the "Founding Fathers intended all lands owned by the federal government to be sold." Mr. Pendley also represented energy companies looking to drill Montana's Badger-Two Medicine region, which is sacred to the Blackfoot Nation. And Mr. Pendley told a Montana radio show that he's "committed to developing all the lands." The fact that his unconfirmed tenure at the BLM has not been confirmed is alarming — even despite his 17-page list of conflicts of interest in his position as acting director.

With last Friday's second extension to at least May 5, Mr. Pendley will have served at the BLM for nearly a year — a year without a proper Senate confirmation vote as the U.S. Constitution requires. Senator Daines and Congressman Gianforte, we see nothing swampier than to be satisfied with the status quo of this situation, as your silence certainly suggests.

Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions or concerns, but we prefer you respond to your constituents directly by publicly opposing William Perry Pendley at the BLM.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Aaron Murphy".

Aaron Murphy
Executive Director
Montana Conservation Voters