

March 18, 2021

The Honorable Lauren Boebert
1609 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Local Opportunities, Conservation, and American Lands ("LOCAL") Act

Dear Representative Boebert:

The Board of County Commissioners ("Board") for Mesa County, Colorado, is pleased to support the Local Opportunities, Conservation, and American Lands ("LOCAL") Act. Grand Junction was selected for the Bureau of Land Management ("BLM") Headquarters because of its substantial cost savings, travel accessibility, quality of life attributes, and increased representation among the communities affected by land management decisions.

Mesa County is more than 72% federal lands and the decisions made by the BLM and other federal land managers have the potential to significantly impact the long-term economic viability of Mesa County and the lives of its residents. In 2018, the Board adopted the *Resolution to Support the Relocation of the Bureau of Land Management Headquarters to Grand Junction, Colorado* (attached) because moving the Headquarters to Grand Junction is, as the resolution states, "in the best interest of counties to have the people who manage our BLM lands, and who make the decisions concerning these lands, living within the communities with high percentages of BLM land."¹

As mentioned in a letter addressed to Senators Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper on January 21, 2021 (attached), relocating the Headquarters to Grand Junction has already provided a tremendous impact on the local economy, including a \$3 million capital infrastructure investment. Locally, the BLM hired 41 full-time employees from a large pool of qualified individuals.² Reversing the decision to locate the BLM Headquarters in Grand Junction would not only be a detrimental loss to local communities, but it could also prove devastating to the families that uprooted their lives to relocate across the West.

Aside from the economic benefits of the relocation to western states, BLM decision-makers are gaining a better understanding of the importance of these lands and their multiple-use mandate and are more accessible and better able to engage with local stakeholders, governments, and tribes affected by land use decisions.

¹ Mesa County Board of Commissioners. (2018). *Resolution to Support the Relocation of the Bureau of Land Management Headquarters to Grand Junction, Colorado*.

² Mesa County Board of Commissioners. (2021). Letter to the Honorable Michael Bennet, Honorable John Hickenlooper.

The benefits of relocating the BLM Headquarters and management positions to western states deserves an opportunity to be fully recognized. We appreciate that the LOCAL Act will ensure western voices continue to be heard on important land use decisions.

Sincerely,



Janet Rowland, Chair
Board of County Commissioners



Cody Davis
Commissioner



Scott McInnis
Commissioner

cc: Governor Jared Polis
The Honorable John Hickenlooper
The Honorable Joe Neguse
The Honorable Doug Lamborn
The Honorable Ed Perlmutter

The Honorable Michael Bennet
The Honorable Diana DeGette
The Honorable Ken Buck
The Honorable Jason Crow

**RESOLUTION TO SUPPORT THE RELOCATION OF THE
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT HEADQUARTERS
TO GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO**

WHEREAS, Department of Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has indicated his intention to relocate the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Headquarters out of Washington, DC to the West; and

WHEREAS, Mesa County, Colorado is 72% federal land, with the BLM asserting control over 981,360 acres; and

WHEREAS, the City of Grand Junction is located in Mesa County, Colorado, is the most populous city in western Colorado, and is the center of government for Mesa County; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of counties to have the people who manage our BLM lands, and who make the decisions concerning these lands, living within the communities with high percentages of BLM land; and

WHEREAS, there are a vast amount of natural resources, ranging from oil, gas, coal, grazing for livestock, wildlife habitat, hunting, streams and trails contained on our federal lands; and

WHEREAS, the economic vitality of Mesa County, Colorado and our surrounding regions is dependent on BLM officials managing our federal lands for multiple use; and

WHEREAS, Mesa County, Colorado, and specifically, Grand Junction, is ideal for the relocation of the BLM Headquarters because of our supportive business climate as well as the abundance of BLM lands in Mesa County, western Colorado and our neighboring states.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mesa County Board of County Commissioners does hereby proclaim that it supports the relocation of the Bureau of Land Management Headquarters to Grand Junction, Colorado and further, it directs that a copy of this Resolution be sent to Secretary Ryan Zinke, each member of our Colorado Congressional Delegation and Governor John Hickenlooper.

DULY MOVED, SECONDED AND PASSED THIS 12TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2018.

Attest:



Sheila Reiner,
Mesa County Clerk and Recorder



John Justman, Chairman
Board of Mesa County Commissioners



Scott McInnis
Commissioner



Rose Pugliese
Commissioner



January 21, 2021

Honorable Michael Bennet, United States Senator

Honorable John Hickenlooper, United States Senator

Dear Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper:

The governments and economic development organizations of western Colorado invite you to Grand Junction, Colorado for a roundtable discussion on the future of the Bureau of Land Management Headquarters (BLM HQ). We firmly believe that the move was in the best interest of the Department of the Interior and we are counting on you to forcefully maintain your past support and advocacy to keep the headquarters in Grand Junction.

Three years ago, with bipartisan support across Colorado, we began a campaign to bring the Bureau of Land Management to Grand Junction. The reasons we advocated for the Headquarters then still stand today. The BLM Headquarters should be located in a place where there is actually BLM land, giving citizens and impacted stakeholders who depend on these lands better access to agency leadership. Unfortunately, because the move was completed under the Trump Administration, it became severely politized. The timing of the move should not take away from the original reasons for the move, which we still stand by today and which you helped champion.

During the pandemic, the BLM HQ hired 41 full time equivalent employees with an average wage of \$120,000 and has invested \$3 million into capital infrastructure, providing an important economic impact to western Colorado. 41 families uprooted themselves, relocated to Grand Junction, purchased homes and enrolled their children in our schools. Many of those positions were positions that the BLM had been unable to fill when they were located in Washington, DC. Understandably, people who want to work for the BLM and are passionate about public lands want to live in a place where they can enjoy public lands. When those positions moved to Grand Junction, the Department of Interior received a wide pool of qualified applicants of a quality that they had not received in DC. The relocation to Grand Junction has accomplished what we all hoped that it would accomplish, but there is still more to do and we need your continued support and resolve to see it through.

After the loss of the US Space Command to Alabama, it would be absolutely devastating to lose the BLM HQ back to Washington, DC. with the stroke of a pen. It is unfortunate that good decisions by well-meaning people have been hijacked by the political divide that is tearing our country apart. We implore you to not let the BLM HQ become another victim of this divide. The BLM HQ moved to put the organization more in touch with the communities that depend on them, not because President Trump wanted to weaken the Department of the Interior. *Please resist cynical political arguments being made to reverse this important policy victory for rural Colorado and public land stakeholders across the West.*

We look forward to hearing from you soon to ensure you have all relevant facts as this decision hangs in the balance.

Sincerely,

Janet Rowland, Commissioner
Mesa County

John Martin, Commissioner
Garfield County

Gary Moyer, Commissioner
Rio Blanco County

Donald Broom, Commissioner
Moffat County

Commissioner
Routt County

Merrit Linke, Commissioner
Grand County

Mike Lane, Commissioner
Delta County

Sue Hansen, Commissioner
Montrose County

Mike Samson, Chairman
AGNC

Diane Schwenke, President
Grand Junction Chamber

Tim Foster, President
Colorado Mesa University

Robin Brown, Director
GJEP

Christian Reece, Director
Club 20

Duke Wortmann, Mayor
City of Grand Junction

Mike Bennett, Manager
City of Fruita

Peter Brixius, Manager
City of Craig

Art Riddle, Mayor
City of New Castle

Janet Hawkinson, Manager
Town of Palisade

Melonie Matarozzo, Manager
Town of Collbran

Roy B. McClung, Mayor
Town of Parachute

Lisa Cook, Manager
Town of Meeker

Lisa Piering, Manager
Town of Rangely

Cc: Governor Jared Polis

United States Department of Interior Secretary-Designate Deb Haaland
Congresswoman Lauren Boebert, Congressman Joe Neguse