

January 8, 2026

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Energy & Natural Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Energy & Natural Resources Committee
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Oppose the Nomination of Stevan Pearce as Bureau of Land Management Director

Dear Chairman Lee, Ranking Member Heinrich,

On behalf of our 81 organizations and millions of members and supporters, we urge you to oppose the nomination of Stevan Pearce to be the Director of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Mr. Pearce has based his political career in absolute disdain for the 245 million acres of public lands he has now been nominated to administer. If confirmed, Mr. Pearce will severely undermine protections for recreation and cultural resources, air and water, and the nation's most imperiled wildlife—if he does not seek to outright sell off our shared natural heritage first.

We urge you to oppose confirming Steve Pearce because he:

Supports Liquidating Public Lands

Mr. Pearce is fundamentally opposed to the existence of public lands and therefore cannot be entrusted with their stewardship. As a sitting congressman, his anti-public lands sentiments were increasingly made plain. In 2012, he publicly professed his desire to “reverse this trend of public ownership of lands.”¹ He also coauthored a letter encouraging then-Speaker Boehner to expand federal fossil fuel production and to sell public lands as deficit-reduction measures, claiming “most of it we do not even need.”² In 2016, he cosponsored the HEARD Act, a bill which directed agencies to sell or exchange public lands.³ And in 2017, he was an outspoken proponent of Trump shrinking and slashing the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, Bears Ears, and Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monuments.⁴ Mr. Pearce’s persistent calls for the privatization of public lands are alarming, especially for the millions of Americans who mere months ago witnessed—and emphatically opposed—the sell-off attempt in the reconciliation package.

Has Encouraged Extremist Actions and Illegal Activity

Mr. Pearce has a disturbing history of encouraging vigilante sentiment and activity in order to seize control of federal public lands and undercut faith in government and democracy. In 2011—as a sitting congressman—Mr. Pearce participated in an event where protesters planned to illegally cut down trees in New Mexico’s Lincoln National Forest in defiance of federal rules; the action was ultimately covered by permits granted just days before the event.⁵ That same year,

¹ ThinkProgress (2012), [GOP Rep. Promises To ‘Reverse This Trend of Public Ownership of Lands](#)

² Tax Notes (2012), [Tax Increases Will Not Close Deficits, House Republicans Say](#)

³ H.R. 5863 (114th Congress), [HEARD Act](#)

⁴ The Guardian (2017), [‘This is our land’: New Mexico’s tribal groups gear up to fight for their home](#); Bloomberg Law (2025), [Trump Names Stevan Pearce to Lead Bureau of Land Management](#)

⁵ E&E News (2011), [N.M. lawmaker hopes one felled tree will send loud message to Forest Service](#)

Mr. Pearce urged the crowd at a town hall to “take control” of public lands.⁶ Mr. Pearce also led rallies opposing protections for other wildlife like the dunes sagebrush lizard and lesser prairie chicken, and sought to delist the Mexican gray wolf and defund its recovery.⁷

In 2014, scofflaw Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy orchestrated an 11-day armed confrontation against law enforcement using the threat of mass violence to defend his illegal, and still ongoing, grazing and degradation of BLM lands.⁸ Later in 2016, when armed militants led by Ammon Bundy (Cliven’s son) occupied the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon, Mr. Pearce did not condemn their cause; in fact, he defended Dwight and Steven Hammond, the ranchers whose arson convictions sparked the occupation.⁹ Consequently, the Hammonds served prison time and had their grazing permits revoked—but the decision as to whether or not to reissue the grazing permits would fall to none other than Mr. Pearce if he is confirmed.¹⁰

These so-called “Sagebrush Rebellion” standoffs helped set the stage for far-right, anti-government, “Patriot” movement groups such as the Three Percenters and Oath Keepers—major players in the Bundy standoffs—to build power and perceived social license in the years to follow.¹¹ These groups were instrumental in the January 6, 2021 Capitol riot.¹²

Mr. Pearce’s predecessor, Ms. Kathleen Sgamma, withdrew her nomination after her criticism of President Trump’s response to the January 6, 2021 Capitol riot had come to light.¹³ In stark contrast, Mr. Pearce aired conspiracy theories about the election and tweeted (in a now-deleted post) just days after the Capitol attack that President Trump “will be our President FOREVER.”¹⁴ President Trump allowed a chain of temporary appointees to fill the role of BLM Director during his first term;¹⁵ but now, if confirmed, Mr. Pearce has shown that he is willing to play an unwavering part of President Trump’s anti-environmental and anti-democratic agenda by heeding unpopular directives, propping up polluters, and selling off and selling out our public lands.

Will Serve the Oil and Gas Industry Rather than the People and Lands

As a lawmaker, Mr. Pearce sought to use public lands to enrich the fossil fuel industry—and himself. Mr. Pearce was a longtime owner of an oilfield services company and maintained holdings in oil-related companies while serving in the U.S. House of Representatives.¹⁶ Mr. Pearce has taken more than \$2 million in political donations from the oil and gas industry,

⁶ White Mountain Independent (2011), [Tea Party rock star](#)

⁷ Roll Call (2013), [Pearce Thinks Less of the Prairie Chicken](#); E&E News (2016), [Congressman bitten by Mexican wolf report he requested](#)

⁸ Associated Press (2024), [10 years after armed standoff with federal agents, Bundy cattle are still grazing disputed rangeland](#)

⁹ Daily Signal (2016), [Conservatives Agree Standoff in Oregon Elevates Debate on Federal Land Ownership](#)

¹⁰ Capital Press (2023), [Litigation to proceed over rescinded grazing permit for Hammond Ranches](#); see also the [Federal Register notice](#) and [BLM eplanning status](#)

¹¹ Southern Poverty Law Center (2014), [War in the West: The Bundy Ranch Standoff and the American Radical Right](#); Las Vegas Sun (2025), [A decade of defiance: The standoff at Bundy ranch and its legacy in the United States](#)

¹² High Country News (2024), [What the Bundy Bunkerville standoff foreshadowed](#); Institute for Strategic Dialogue (2024), [Ten years later, reverberations from the Bundy standoff continue to shape the anti-government landscape](#)

¹³ MS NOW (2025), [Key Trump nominee withdraws after Jan. 6 criticism came to public light](#)

¹⁴ Santa Fe New Mexican (2021), [New Mexico GOP leader still stands by Trump](#)

¹⁵ The New York Times (2025), [A Champion of Oil Ends Her Bid to Lead the Bureau of Land Management](#)

¹⁶ Associated Press (2018), [APNewsBreak: GOP's Pearce rents out oilfield equipment](#)

roughly 3 times as much as the next special interest.¹⁷ His congressional record is so devoid of support for basic environmental protections that his votes have yielded him a 4% lifetime score from the League of Conservation Voters.¹⁸

Mr. Pearce flagrantly has not merited the honor of stewarding the lands that have been entrusted to present and future generations of Americans. We urge you to oppose his confirmation.

Sincerely,

Center for Biological Diversity

350 Eugene

350 Salem Oregon

350PDX

Allegheny-Blue Ridge Alliance (ABRA)

Alliance for the Wild Rockies

Animal Wonders

Bark for Mt Hood

Californians for Western Wilderness

Cascadia Wildlands

Climate Hawks Vote

Coast Range Association

Colorado Wildlands Project

Elders Climate Action (ECA)

Endangered Species Coalition

Environmental Center of San Diego (ECOSD)

Environmental Protection Information Center (EPIC)

Faith Organizing Alliance (FOA)

FOUR PAWS USA

Friends of Nevada Wilderness

Friends of the Earth US

Friends of the White Salmon River (FWSR)

FSSEE

Great Old Broads for Wilderness

Great Old Broads for Wilderness, Cascade Volcano Chapter

Green Cove Defense Committee

GreenFaith Wy'East

GreenLatinos

Greenpeace USA

Heartwood

High Country Conservation Advocates

Idaho Conservation League

John Muir Project

Kettle Range Conservation Group

Large Carnivore Fund

¹⁷ OpenSecrets (retrieved November 21, 2025), [Steve Pearce](#)

¹⁸ League of Conservation Voters (retrieved November 21, 2025), [Steve Pearce](#)

Legal Rights for the Salish Sea (LRSS)
Los Angeles Audubon Society
Make The Road Nevada
Mason County Climate Justice (MCCJ)
Minnesota Division Izaak Walton League of America
Montana Conservation Voters
Mtn Bio
National Wolfwatcher Coalition
Native Organizers Alliance Action Fund
Native Voters Alliance NV
Nevada Environmental Justice Coalition
New Mexico Wild
Northern Alaska Environmental Center
Norton Bay Watershed Council
Partnership for Policy Integrity
Predator Defense
Project Eleven Hundred
Protect the Kobuk
Quiet Use Coalition
Rio Grande Valley Broadbands of the Great Old Broads for Wilderness
Sage Steppe wild
San Luis Valley Ecosystem Council (SLVEC)
Santa Fe Forest Coalition
Save Our Parks
Seeding Sovereignty
Seven Generations Innovation, LLC
Sheep Mountain Alliance
Soda Mountain Wilderness Council
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance
Sovereign Inupiat for a Living Arctic (SILA)
Standing Trees
The Alaska Center
The Center for Responsible Forestry
The Urban Wildlands Group
Thurston Climate Action Team--Tree Action Group
Tualatin Riverkeepers
Wellspring Spa
Western Wildlife Conservancy
Wild Connections
Wild Cumberland
Wild Hope
Wild Watershed
WildEarth Guardians
Wildlife for All
Wyoming Wilderness Association (WWA)
Wyoming Wildlife Advocates