
August 6, 2019

Mr. William Perry Pendley
Acting Director
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington D.C. 20240

Dear Acting Director Pendley:


Clear, coordinated and consistent application of federal vegetation management practices is integral to maintaining the health of western forests, preventing dangerous and damaging wildfires, and ensuring grid reliability. Western Governors support policies that enable utilities to undertake necessary vegetation management actions on and adjacent to federal transmission rights-of-way, such as those considered in the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Fuel Breaks in the Great Basin (DOI-BLM-ID-0000-2017-0001-EIS).

This plan's active management principles would be valuable throughout the West. Integrating vegetation management into large-scale fuels management planning offers many benefits: it is cost-effective; it reduces wildfire risk in utility corridors; it promotes grid resilience; it helps protect soil and watershed health, as well as wildlife habitat; and it can also address invasive species. Consequently, Western Governors encourage BLM to apply similar proactive fuels and vegetation management strategies to areas outside the Great Basin.


The Western Governors' Association is launching a collaborative effort with the utility sector and other interested stakeholders on wildfire mitigation through active management, including vegetation management, under its 2018 Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. This effort may promote similar active management strategies and would benefit from BLM's experience and input, as well as potentially provide BLM with more tools to address wildfire in the West.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. Please regard Western Governors as invested partners as you consider and implement this plan.

Sincerely,



Doug Burgum
Governor of North Dakota
Chair, WGA



Kate Brown
Governor of Oregon
Vice Chair, WGA