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## San Diego County Democrats for Environmental Action Disappointed with Renewed Term for Acting BLM Director William Pendley

SAN DIEGO – The Trump administration has reappointed conservative activist and long-time public lands foe William Pendley as acting director of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for the third time this year, extending his status through June 5.

The [announcement, made Tuesday](#) by Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt, is part of the administration's ongoing assault on decades of conservation progress and our nation's federal public lands. The BLM is charged with managing more than 245 million acres of federal public land, including dozens of designated Wilderness areas, National Monuments, and thousands of square miles in Southern California.

Shortly after Pendley was first appointed acting director in July 2019, he announced plans to physically move the BLM out of Washington, D.C., to Grand Junction, Colorado, ostensibly to more easily coordinate with oil and gas interests far away from oversight in the nation's capitol. Thousands of federal employees were forced to move or quit, in what has amounted to another agency-wide purge of capable, career, non-partisan agency administrators.

Beginning with his earlier service under Interior Secretary James Watt in the early 1980s, Pendley has long advocated selling off public lands to the highest bidder. As acting BLM director, Pendley has further enabled oil and gas exploration on hundreds of thousands of acres once off-limits to such activity, including within the former boundaries of two radically-redrawn National Monuments: Grand Staircase-Escalante, which was established by President Clinton in 1996, and Bears Ears, established by President Obama in 2016, both in Utah.

Before taking over the BLM, which manages dozens of Wilderness areas, National Monuments, and thousands of square miles here in California, Pendley repeatedly sued the agency he now leads while serving as the head of a conservative legal foundation.

“This is why elections matter. This is why so many of us were so opposed to Trump,” said club-co-founder and former president Tommy Hough, who now serves as vice president for policy. “Our nation’s environmental and conservation legacy is on the edge of the abyss, largely due to the destructive ignorance of the Trump administration and the hostility of congressional Republicans to all things conservation, despite the fact the BLM’s management role has previously been embraced and upheld from administration to administration.”

San Diego County Democrats for Environmental Action is among dozens of organizations that opposes Pendley’s continued leadership of this national agency. Our organization believes it is vital to have leaders who believe in competent management, and can be relied upon to serve in the best interests of the public by appointing the best, most responsible administrators to manage and preserve our wild spaces and public lands for everyone.

“As a candidate, Mr. Trump never made any secret of his desire to gut federal agencies,” said Hough. “Look at what’s been done to the EPA, the Forest Service, and the National Park Service. They chased away anyone with a science background, and anyone who could tell them ‘no’ in an official capacity.”

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*Chartered in 2014, San Diego County Democrats for Environmental Action seek to foster active interest in the Democratic Party, encourage greater support of the California Democratic Party environmental platform, contribute to party leadership and responsibility, provide a constructive role for volunteers in Democratic politics, promote an activist base, and assist and enable Democratic candidates to run – and win – on environmental and conservation principles.*