

DRAFT - November XX, 2020

President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.
Biden-Harris Transition
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Nomination of Rep. Debra Haaland for Secretary of the Interior

Dear President-elect Joseph R. Biden Jr.,

On behalf of our organization and the millions of members and supporters they represent, we write to express our enthusiastic support for the nomination of Rep. Debra Haaland for Secretary of the Interior. When confirmed, Rep. Haaland would be the first Indigenous person to run any Cabinet-level Department in our nation's history. Given the Department of the Interior's trustee obligations to Indigenous Peoples, Tribal Nations, Native Hawaiians and Native Alaskans — a trust responsibility that the Department has fallen short on far too many times — nominating Rep. Haaland is a vital step towards reforming all of the agencies within the Department of the Interior to meet those obligations, making each agency more just and equitable, fully protecting the interests of Indigenous Peoples, and importantly, making the Department a true long-term steward of our nation's most precious resources.

As chairperson of the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands, Rep. Haaland is fully qualified, capable and ready to become the 54th Secretary of the Interior. For the last two years, she has fought against the destructive acts and policies of the Trump Administration and the lawless acts of Secretary David Bernhardt. She understands the urgency to act quickly to repair the damage caused by the Trump Administration, she understands the critical need to reform the Department to ensure that these abuses never occur again, and she understands the need to swiftly implement bold policies to address the most pressing challenges our public lands and waters face—the climate emergency and the extinction crisis.

Rep. Haaland has shown visionary leadership in Congress. She is the original House sponsor of the Resolution to conserve 30 percent of all U.S. lands and waters by 2030,¹ she sponsored the Climate Stewardship Act of 2019,² the Antiquities Act of 2019,³ the Environmental Justice Legacy Pollution Cleanup Act of 2020,⁴ as well as dozens of bills to improve the safety and well-being of Indigenous people across the United States. She has supported legislative efforts to strengthen environmental justice, protect our air and water from pollution, keep people safe from dangerous pesticides, protect endangered species, and strengthen the conservation management of our public lands, waters and oceans.

Rep. Haaland is a 35th generation New Mexican, and an enrolled member of the Pueblo of Laguna. She is the first Native American woman to be elected to lead a State Party, where as

¹ H. RES. 835

² H.R. 4269

³ H.R. 1050

⁴ H.R. 8271

Chair of the Democratic Party of New Mexico, she focused her efforts on building political power in Indigenous communities that are too often taken for granted during the electoral process. She physically stood with other Indigenous Peoples at Standing Rock protesting the illegal and immoral acts of the Trump Administration and State officials to protect the sovereign rights of tribal nations and fight against the avarice and greed of the fossil fuel industry. In 2018, Rep. Haaland became one of the first Native American women to serve in Congress, and immediately assumed a leadership role in both the Democratic and Progressive Caucuses.

Simply put, Rep. Haaland's accomplishments throughout her life and career are simply extraordinary and a role model for anyone who wants to bring positive change to this country.

We can think of no better person to run the Department of the Interior.

Sincerely,